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Meanings of Freedom: Virginia Contraband Settlements and Wartime Reconstruction

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MEANINGS OF FREEDOM

Virginia Contraband Settlements and Wartime Reconstruction

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

by

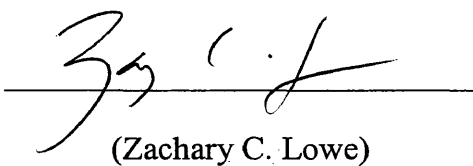
Zachary C. Lowe

2003

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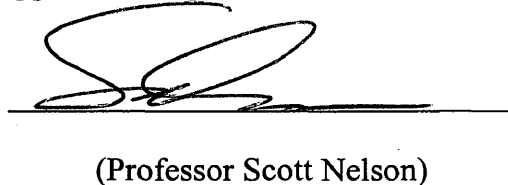
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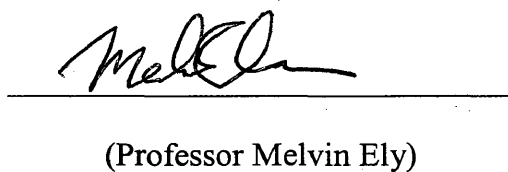


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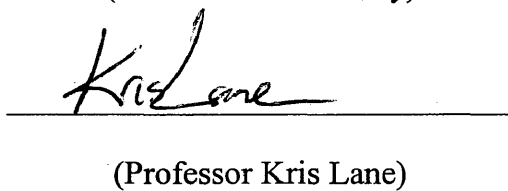
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ABSTRACT

Few historians have focused on the critical importance of wartime Reconstruction and federal policy toward "contrabands," slaves who took advantage of wartime chaos and escaped into Northern territory and the lines of the Union army. Indeed, the overarching successes and failures of postbellum Reconstruction often found their origins in the innumerable contraband camps where blacks, army officials, and missionary associations struggled to define the uncertain limits of "freedom."

The scholars that have looked at contraband settlements have given surprisingly little attention to contraband camps in Virginia, especially Freedmen's Village, a "model" settlement that drew unique publicity because of its proximity to Washington and its location on the famous and picturesque estate of Robert E. Lee. Overall, this essay seeks to evaluate one of America's most famous contraband settlements. Can Freedmen's Village be more precisely classified as an experiment in free labor and independence, or as a restrictive camp that foreshadowed the tragic failings of postbellum Reconstruction? Or does Freedmen's Village defy simple categorization?

In general, government officials and Southern planters rejected the Village freedpeople's version of freedom. Despite Republican pronouncements to the contrary, this essay will argue that Republican theories of free labor were never implemented at Freedmen's Village; workers were rarely paid and often beaten by Village "overseers," while rampant impressment and brutal work schedules prevented freedpeople from controlling their time or labor. The federal government's concerns with organizing a potentially troublesome and burdensome population and feeding the hungry Union army took precedence over introducing freedpeople to a true "free labor" economy.

Historians of wartime and post-war Reconstruction have likewise neglected Virginia's Eastern Shore, a fascinating region that officially rejected secession yet held fast to traditional Southern values of racism and slavery. When the Shore's most ardent secessionists fled to the Confederate mainland, they left a population of landless freedpeople in the hands of the Union army and federal government. Thus, the Eastern Shore provided an interesting testing ground for wartime Reconstruction policy within a nominally Unionist region.

Ironically, the Shore's Unionist stance ultimately worked against the freedpeople of Accomac and Northampton counties; while army and government officials confiscated Confederate land and constructed contraband farming enterprises throughout the disloyal South, officials on the Shore hesitated to take similar steps that would inevitably have alienated loyal Shore planters. As a result, federal officials immediately adopted a brutally efficient contract labor system. Freedpeople who desperately sought land ownership and financial independence were instead contractually hired out to local planters under blatantly unfair terms.

The stories of these two communities foreshadowed the larger failures of postbellum Reconstruction. Conservative military and Bureau officials motivated by self-interest and open racism shunned radical "free labor ideology" and effectively allied with Virginia planters to ensure that freedpeople would remain in positions of economic dependency.

MEANINGS OF FREEDOM

Introduction

"De Lord has heard the groans of de people, and has come down to deliver! You all knows in Dixie you worked de day long, an' never got no satisfacshun. But, ncw, what you make is yourn!"¹

--Virginia slave George Payne on December 31, 1862, one day before the Emancipation Proclamation was to take effect.

"Mr. President. It is my desire to be free. You will please let me know if we are free. And what I can do. I write you for advice. Please send me word this week, or as soon as possible."²

-Maryland slave to Abraham Lincoln, August 1864

Eric Foner's seminal work, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877 (1988), synthesized and added to a generation of scholarship that represented Reconstruction as a time of hope and unprecedented opportunity, an era marked by black political activism and community development. Foner also tipped the scales toward those scholars who saw the Radical Republicans as having been genuinely devoted to black political and civil equality and literally radical rather than viscerally conservative in their political outlook. Reconstruction historians also agree, however, that these radical goals and advances were ultimately undermined by a variety of forces that combined to place Southern blacks in a position of economic dependence and political impotence. These forces include the rise of Southern Democrats united by a program and rhetoric of white supremacy, savagely effective violence directed against black voters and community institutions, and the growing reluctance of conservative, business-minded Northern Republicans to interfere in Southern affairs when national economic problems seemed more urgent.³

Few historians have focused on the critical importance of wartime Reconstruction and federal policy toward "contrabands," slaves who courageously took advantage of wartime chaos and escaped into Northern territory and the lines of the Union army. Indeed, the overarching successes and failures of postbellum Reconstruction often found their origins in the innumerable contraband camps where blacks, army officials, and missionary associations struggled to define the uncertain limits of "freedom." Not surprisingly, the few historians who have closely studied the bewildering array of Union contraband camps have been unable to reach an interpretive consensus on the nature of the "freedom" that was constantly negotiated and renegotiated by freedpeople and their white caretakers.

In *From Contraband to Freedman*, Louis Gerteis looks at contraband camps in nearly every region of the nation and arrives at the decidedly pessimistic conclusion that contraband policy was defined by "the failure of the government to protect blacks as free laborers," a disastrous shortcoming that "shaped postwar policies toward the freedman and in large measure precluded the possibility of radical social transformation."⁴ Numerous localized monographs support Gerteis's general argument; C. Peter Ripley and others have emphasized the oppressive nature of Gen. Nathaniel Banks's contract labor program in Louisiana during the latter years of the war, and Martha Bigelow and several others have outlined the disturbing tendency of army officials in the Mississippi Valley to separate black families and force able-bodied males into military service and unfair contractual plantation labor under ex-masters.⁵

Other historians have come to startlingly different conclusions. Cam Walker claims that a camp in Corinth, Mississippi, "very nearly became a kind of independent community,"⁶ while Janet Lee Hermann and others have revealed the existence of a virtually "independent colony of contrabands" at Davis Bend, Mississippi, where blacks controlled the agricultural labor process and created a functioning plantation court system.⁷ Most famously, Willie Lee Rose's prize-winning Rehearsal for Reconstruction argues for the brief existence of self-supporting contraband colonies on the Sea Islands around Port Royal, South Carolina, where blacks cultivated the land under "precarious title" and "took care of their local troubles with aplomb."⁸

Throughout this historiographical debate⁹, scholars have given surprisingly little attention to contraband camps in Virginia, especially Freedmen's Village, a "model" settlement that drew unique publicity because of its proximity to Washington and its location on the famous and picturesque estate of Robert E. Lee. Contemporary observers hailed Freedmen's Village as a triumph of free labor, an orderly and industrious camp that escaped the crowding and disease that devastated Washington's urban camps and taught freedpeople the ethic of free labor by allowing them to cultivate their own land while forcing them to pay rent and taxes. Moreover, visitors commended the vocational training offered at the camp's Industrial School, and applauded the top-notch education provided by the missionaries of the American Tract Society. Newspaper reporters were happily surprised by the attractively whitewashed houses that held separate nuclear families, and officials were pleased

with the medical care provided by the camp hospital and nursing home for elderly freedpeople.

The small number of historians who have examined Freedmen's Village have rarely questioned the validity of this account; Roberta Schildt has written several articles praising the conditions of the camp, while Felix James has focused mostly on the legal battles involving the Arlington estate during the 1880s and 1890s. Only Joseph Reidy has produced a truly nuanced study of Freedmen's Village, one that *begins* to examine seriously how "freedom" emerged at Arlington; Reidy, however, focuses almost exclusively on the conservative administration of the Freedmen's Bureau.¹⁰

This essay will attempt to build on Reidy's work by placing Freedmen's Village within the general historiographical narrative of contraband camps and examining the unique version of wartime Reconstruction that emerged in Arlington. The essay will proceed chronologically through three stages: the founding of Freedmen's Village in the spring of 1863, the Village under military rule from 1863 until early 1865, and the administration of the Freedmen's Bureau that began in early 1865. Throughout these stages, careful attention will be given to the interaction of government officials, American Tract Society missionaries and teachers, and freedpeople themselves in determining the structure and functioning of the Village. Overall, this essay seeks to evaluate one of America's most famous contraband settlements. Can Freedmen's Village be more precisely classified as an experiment in free labor and independence, or as a restrictive camp that foreshadowed the tragic failings of postbellum Reconstruction? Or does Freedmen's Village defy simple

categorization? This essay will attempt to answer these questions by rediscovering the experience of thousands of "contrabands" who tried to define freedom on their own terms.

In general, government officials and Southern planters rejected the Village freedpeople's version of freedom. Despite Republican pronouncements to the contrary, this essay will argue that Republican theories of free labor were never implemented at Freedmen's Village; workers were rarely paid and often beaten by Village "overseers," while rampant impressment and brutal work schedules prevented freedpeople from controlling their time or labor. The federal government's concerns with organizing a potentially troublesome and burdensome population and feeding the hungry Union army took precedence over introducing freedpeople to a true "free labor" economy.¹¹

Geographic factors also influenced the development of an exploitative, publicly controlled labor system at Arlington. Local white residents abandoned the Arlington region early in the war, allowing the oncoming Union army to occupy the area without a fight. As a result, Union officials could not (at first) emulate the contract labor systems used by their counterparts in heavily populated areas of the South and Mississippi Valley. Exploitative in their own right, these contract labor systems usually amounted to another version of forced labor—one in which military and (later) Bureau officials forced freedpeople to sign annual labor contracts with local planters.

Lacking a local planter class that needed such farm labor, Union officials decided to create a grossly exploitative labor camp—one that could produce food and

garments for Union soldiers and needy Washington residents. The labor system implemented at the Village was therefore the antithesis of the ideal Republican "free labor" system; it was public rather than private, and freedpeople were not permitted to control the products of their labor and were never compensated at market value.

As the incoming flood of freedpeople caused severe crowding in the Village itself, hundreds of Arlington Villagers were moved to a separate settlement on Mason's Island, where they were contracted out to Maryland and Virginia planters who could travel to the small island and have their pick of available contrabands living there. Freedpeople were usually forced to sign restrictive one-year contracts and were rarely given fair compensation for their labor. Though private contracts appear preferable to Village labor on the surface, in reality such contract systems expressed the belief—widely held among military and Bureau officials—that freedpeople were fit only for dependent agricultural labor in the postbellum economy.¹²

Predictably, freedpeople resisted both the oppressive Village policy and contract-based "free labor"; they escaped contracts, brought planters to justice, and agitated for permanent ownership of Village land. In doing so, Village freedpeople articulated their own version of freedom, one based on independent land ownership rather than wage labor within a market economy.¹³

Historians of wartime and post-war Reconstruction have seldom studied Virginia's Eastern Shore, a fascinating region that officially rejected secession yet held fast to traditional Southern values of racism and slavery. When the Shore's most

ardent secessionists fled to the Confederate mainland, they left a population of landless freedpeople in the hands of the Union army and federal government. Thus, the Eastern Shore provided an interesting testing ground for wartime Reconstruction policy within a nominally Unionist region.

Ironically, the Shore's Unionist stance ultimately worked against the freedpeople of Accomac and Northampton counties; while army and government officials confiscated Confederate land and constructed contraband farming enterprises throughout the disloyal South, officials on the Shore hesitated to take similar steps that would inevitably have alienated loyal Shore planters. As a result, federal officials immediately adopted a brutally efficient contract labor system. Freedpeople who desperately sought land ownership and financial independence were instead contractually hired out to local planters under blatantly unfair terms. Despite the protests of angry freedpeople and the genuine efforts of a few government officials, Shore planters abused freedpeople and regularly cheated them out of wages. Shore freedpeople quickly realized that military and (later) Bureau officials simply did not believe in the "free labor ideology" of Radical Republicans; in fact, such officials used their power to make sure that the majority of Shore freedpeople would be in no position to compete in the postwar economy.¹⁴

Tragically, federal non-intervention extended into the post-war years, when successful Shore freedpeople (including several ex-Union soldiers who owned firearms) fell victim to a violent reign of organized terror directed by local whites. As masked white men attacked all signs of black success and community strength,

Freedmen's Bureau officials relied on racist state and county courts that consistently acquitted known criminals and refused to allow freedpeople to testify.¹⁵

The emergence of a contract labor system on the Eastern Shore also underscores the influence of geographic factors on Union policy toward freedpeople. While the lack of an immediate planter class forestalled the development of a private contract labor system in Arlington, the presence of a large and easily accessible planter class on the Shore allowed Union officials to avoid any public responsibility for Shore freedpeople by forcing them to sign private contracts with local planters. In essence, geographic variations influenced the timing of policy developments; when a nearby local planter class was available, government officials implemented a contract labor system immediately. When the opposite was true (as in Arlington), military officials used the freedpeople for their own purposes before turning them over to planters when normal economic conditions began to return in 1865.

The stories of these two communities foreshadowed the larger failures of postbellum Reconstruction. Conservative military and Bureau officials motivated by self-interest and open racism shunned radical “free labor ideology” and effectively allied with Virginia planters to ensure that freedpeople would remain in positions of economic dependency.

Chapter 1: "A Return to Their Healthy Avocations as Field Hands":

Republican Free Labor Thought and Freedman's Village

"There is a decided advantage afforded to them of the salutary effects of good pure country air, and a return to their former healthy avocations as field hands... The arrangement I propose will not only in my opinion conduce to the sanitary and moral improvement of the contrabands, but will save the Government an immense amount of money."

-Lt. Col. Elias M. Greene to Maj. Gen. S. P. Heintzelman on the potential benefits of Freedman's Village, May 1863.¹⁶

Maryland and Virginia slaves demanded the establishment of Freedman's Village in the spring of 1863. Indeed, slaves inundated the Union army well before the federal government devised an official procedure for handling fugitives. Initially, federal officials reassured both loyal and secessionist slaveowners that the Union military would not interfere with their peculiar institution and would promptly return any fugitives. However, Southern slaves' hunger for freedom outweighed their fear of being caught and returned to vengeful masters. Upon entering Virginia in 1861, Union army officials were stunned by "the swarms of negroes...taking refuge" in their lines.¹⁷ Slave escapes were often quite creative and dramatic; many slaves on the Eastern coast of Maryland and Virginia secretly climbed into Union naval ships, while older slave men who encountered friendly Union regiments covertly returned to their plantations to retrieve their wives and children.¹⁸

Consequently, military officers were forced to create a coherent policy for dealing with thousands of fugitive slaves. In the spring of 1861, General Benjamin Butler famously categorized the slaves as "contraband of war"-- material that could be confiscated because it was valuable to the Confederate army. Congress immediately provided the legal foundation for Butler's military policy of keeping runaways by passing the controversial First Confiscation Act, which declared that masters who allowed the Confederate army to employ their slaves subsequently forfeited all claims to them.

Slaves responded enthusiastically, arriving inside Union fortifications in massive numbers. Slaves from Maryland and Virginia flooded Union lines in Northern Virginia and escaped to Washington in droves. The process accelerated in the summer of 1862, when Congress abolished slavery in the nation's capital and passed the decisive Second Confiscation Act, which guaranteed freedom for *all* slaves who successfully escaped from masters residing in Confederate states. Along the way, many escapees served as temporary spies for the Union army: the Official Records of the war are filled with letters reporting that "a runaway contraband came in and reported" Confederate troop movements.¹⁹

Despite the passage of the Confiscation Acts, escape into the Union lines in and around Washington was risky, particularly for Maryland slaves. Since Maryland remained nominally loyal to the Union, the Confiscation Acts did not apply there; runaway slaves from there remained illegal fugitives subject to immediate return and reenslavement. However, many Maryland slaves continued to pursue freedom and were aided by Union generals and soldiers who openly disobeyed the Fugitive Slave

Law. Many Maryland fugitives simply fled to Alexandria County and claimed Virginia residency, while others escaped directly to Washington, where Northern regiments provided shelter and protection from loyal Maryland slaveholders.

Maryland fugitives undoubtedly would have been reenslaved more frequently if not for relatively unknown abolitionist Union generals like Henry Briggs, who boldly defied the orders of his superior officer by safeguarding fugitives. When chastised by his commander, Briggs replied, "If the alternative presented to me was to deliver (the fugitive) up on the claim of a pretended master or to suffer the consequence of a disobedience of law and be dismissed from the service in which I have volunteered, I should not hesitate to choose the latter."²⁰

Maryland politicians and slaveholders were incensed by such blatant violations of law. Congressmen Charles Calvert demanded that Secretary of War Simon Cameron "exclude from all camps...such slaves as" were the rightful property of Maryland whites, and forcefully reminded Cameron that "it is not the desire of this Government to encourage the escape of this species from lawful owners."²¹

Individual slaveholders hired slave-catchers to infiltrate Union regiments around Washington and retrieve escaped slaves. However, these ventures were mostly unsuccessful; dozens of petitions and angry letters complained that Union troops commonly "surrounded" slave-catchers, "menaced them and applied such opprobrious epithets, such as Negro stealer and Negro catcher...until [they were] obliged to leave the ground."²² Another slaveholder complained that his chosen agent was violently expelled by Union troops urging their peers to "shoot him, bayonet him, kill him, pitch him out!"²³

Not all Union regiments were equally welcoming. An abolitionist soldier privately questioned his general's tendency to act "in strict conformity with general orders"²⁴ by returning escaped slaves, while another general justified his policy of capturing and reenslaving all Maryland fugitives by proclaiming that "I care nothing for this Devilish Nigger difficulty. I desire to save the union, and will cooperate with the Administration in everything tending to that important result."²⁵

Unfortunately, the punishment for attempted escape was often devastating. One Maryland slave described the beatings administered to two reclaimed fugitives:

They were both taken to the barn and severely whipped. Their clothes were raised and tied over their heads to keep their screams from disturbing the neighborhood and then were tied up and whipped very severely and then taken to jail. (The woman) had a child about nine months old which was taken from her and died soon after.²⁶

Others were sentenced to lengthy terms in Baltimore Penitentiary, while those who were forced back into the drudgery of field labor were sometimes denied sufficient clothing and food.²⁷

Despite these risks, slaves continued to flood Union lines outside Washington. Able-bodied freedmen built fortifications and cleared roads for the military, while women, children, and the elderly were mostly sent to temporary contraband settlements in Washington. Indeed, dozens of soldier diaries mention the "exodus of contrabands" to the nation's capital, a city that was woefully unprepared to shelter the large number of freedpeople seeking refuge there.²⁸ While some able-bodied men found work at a Washington naval yard, the vast majority of freedpeople were

haphazardly shuttled into a series of makeshift camps. Initially, many were crowded into unused cells at Old Capital Prison, where conditions were deplorable; witnesses found small cells, each occupied by approximately twenty "contrabands half-clad in rags," sleeping uncomfortably on the stone floor of the prison.²⁹

By late 1861, the prison already held twice its normal capacity, forcing government officials to search for new settlements for the overflow of contrabands. Newly-appointed Washington contraband superintendent Danforth B. Nichols sent many ex-slaves to a building known as Duff Green's Row. There, the contrabands were "herded" into several small gender-segregated and insufficiently ventilated chambers until a smallpox epidemic devastated the camp in the spring of 1862. Nichols also arranged for the construction of several outdoor settlements where most freedpeople were squeezed into flimsy tents and shoddy cabins. The one-story cabins measured only 120 square feet but frequently housed ten or more freedpeople, an unhealthy situation that necessitated "promiscuous herding" and facilitated the deadly spread of smallpox. The proliferation of smallpox cases was accelerated by the lack of separate bathroom facilities and became so pronounced that justifiably fearful Washingtonians suggested that infected freedpeople be required to post a yellow flag outside their tent or cabin. Moreover, the unguarded freedpeople at these outdoor camps were vulnerable to both Maryland slave-catchers and military officials who often kidnapped unwilling men and forced them into unpaid military labor. Others were forcefully "bound out" as domestic servants only to be dismissed after a month and denied pay, while freedpeople who actually received fair wages often fell victim to local burglars and ruffians.³⁰

These intolerable conditions did not go unnoticed. Government investigators at Old Capitol Prison characterized the camp as "anything but clean and orderly" and condescendingly suggested that "the negroes be removed to some place to keep them apart from respectable whites."³¹ Likewise, military officials warned naval Secretary Gideon Welles that there were "no longer sufficient accommodations" in the naval yard for incoming freedpeople.³² Washington newspapers reported the horrid conditions of camp settlements and alleged that an increasing number of impoverished freedpeople were resorting to theft and other crimes.³³

While whites selfishly lobbied for the removal of the "undesirable contrabands," Washington's liberal reform groups and powerful black community supported the construction of a healthy and secure settlement for the benefit of the freedpeople. District Superintendent Danforth Nichols acknowledged that contraband families wanted to live separately and have their familial bonds maintained rather than be grouped with several other families or segregated by sex.³⁴ Washington's leading black activists and preachers sent letters and petitions to government officials reminding them that "we see [contrabands] in droves every day perambulating the streets of Washington, homeless, shoeless, dressless and moneyless."³⁵ In April of 1862, forty black men signed a petition requesting that "there shall be opened to these colored people a region" outside of Washington.³⁶ Meanwhile, the Washington branch of the National Freedmen Relief Association was formed in 1862 to meet the "immediate bodily wants" of the ex-slaves by providing them with necessary clothing, blankets, food, and kindling.³⁷ Likewise, Washington's "well-to-do colored

people" formed the Contraband Relief Association to educate the ex-slaves and alleviate their physical suffering.

While addressing the immediate concerns of the impoverished contrabands, these groups and like-minded missionary associations simultaneously urged the federal government to construct a more hospitable settlement featuring adequate housing and the opportunity for semi-independent agricultural labor similar to the celebrated "free labor" system being utilized on the South Carolina Sea Islands. It was in this context that Lieutenant Colonel Elias M. Greene—then working as Quartermaster General--suggested that freedpeople be moved onto a settlement on Robert E. Lee's estate in Arlington, where "families need not be separated" and freedpeople could experience the "salutary effects of pure country air and a return to their former healthy avocations as field hands." While Greene acknowledged that the move would lead to the "sanitary and moral improvement of the contrabands," he tellingly theorized that the camp could "save the government an immense amount of money" by employing "the force of contrabands" that had previously been "idle in this city and a dead weight on the government."³⁸

While escaped freedpeople received invaluable aid from sympathetic generals and inter-racial support organizations, their own desire for freedom eventually produced conditions that led to the founding of the Arlington camp. At the same time, however, Elias Greene's statement outlining the potential benefits of Freedmen's Village suggested that this "model" settlement might ultimately serve the financial interests of the federal government rather than the freedpeople themselves.

"Every one seems contented, and in a most prosperous condition...Colonel Green has provided for the race a miniature city of their own, with every auxiliary that can in any manner tend to their advancement and happiness...All of them have taken hold of their new work with a hearty good will. The institution is a paying one too!

-Washington *Evening Star* reporting on Freedmen's Village, December 4, 1863.

"You, not they, will decide when they are to work and when not. Anyone who disobeys will be sent to the Guardhouse and fed only bread and water until they are willing to obey orders."

-J. M. Brown to Mr. G. G. Besley, farm supervisor at Freedmen's Village, December 1864.

The few historians who have examined Freedmen's Village with a critical eye have focused mostly on the post-war administration of the Freedmen's Bureau. Consequently, while historians have demonstrated how Freedmen's Village fits within the pessimistic post-revisionist narrative of post-war Reconstruction, they have failed to thoroughly analyze the structure of the Village during the war itself. In fact, while the Village can be called a "model" wartime contraband camp, the restrictive policies of military officials and their refusal to embrace free labor ideology foreshadowed the failures of post-war Reconstruction.

Freedmen's Village was probably destined to become a famous contraband settlement. Located just south of Washington and constructed on the grand estate of the Confederacy's most famous general, Freedmen's Village quickly became a well-known national showcase for government officials seeking to prove that the federal government genuinely supported the plight of Southern blacks. Officials deliberately invited newspaper reporters to the Village, allowing them to admire the "commodious buildings" that housed separate families, the "comfortable" home for the elderly and infirm "where every attention (was) paid them by friends of their own color."

Reporters also remarked upon the substantially lower mortality rate of this "clean and prosperous city."³⁹

Several wartime government reports revealed a similar enthusiasm for the conditions of the village. The Quartermaster General complimented the "ample accommodations" of the Village hospital in 1863; a year later, he still found the entire settlement "clean and well-policed," and theorized that the Village had "saved the lives of hundreds from death and disease." Elias Greene lovingly described the Village school run by the American Tract Society, emphasizing the "well-ventilated rooms" and "good furniture" that compared favorably with those of "the best common schools in the North." Most important, the camp provided "employment for a considerable number of men and women not fit" for the brutal physical hardships of military labor and armed service. Indeed, the government specifically designed Freedmen's Village as a temporary training facility where women, children, and "non-able" men would learn the essential values of labor and "self-reliance" while the sick and elderly would be cared for at the expense of the government.⁴⁰

There was a substantial amount of truth in this positive rhetoric; Freedmen's Village did indeed feature elements of "a miniature city" based superficially on free labor ideology. Black women and "non-able" men independently rented their family cabins and cultivated their own agricultural plots for a monthly wage of \$10, while other adults attended the vocational Industrial School and Village children learned literacy and arithmetic at the American Tract Society school. Villagers even paid a monthly \$5 tax into the "Contraband Fund," which financed the daily rations, clothing, and medical care offered at the Village. Thus, the Village resembled a free,

self-sustaining community while simultaneously generating surplus food for hungry soldiers and hefty financial profits for the government through the imposition of monthly \$3 rents.⁴¹

Wartime conditions at the Village also compared favorably with those in other contraband camps nationwide, most notably the remaining settlements in nearby urban Washington. Throughout the war, the National Freedmen's Relief Association remained justifiably concerned about the "utter destitution" and "bodily physical needs" of Washington contrabands. Their wartime reports overflowed with references to the "rags called clothes" freedpeople wore, the drastic need for blankets and bedsteads to battle the crippling cold weather and disease, and the meager rations of soup the Association was able to provide. Both the NFRA and the Contraband Relief Association tried to imitate the successful school system implemented at Arlington, but suffered from "a scarcity of school rooms and a want of school furniture."⁴²

Other Washington settlements designed specifically for orphaned children utilized "badly constructed barracks full of cracks and holes" that were "fully unsuitable for children."⁴³ Freedpeople at the infamous Camp Barker were decimated by a smallpox epidemic that routinely killed half a dozen residents each day, a condition that was exacerbated by a lack of bedding and the prevalence of clothing that inspectors invariably described as "filthy" and "ragged." Overall, mortality among Camp Barker contrabands stabilized at about half a dozen deaths per day from a fluctuating population that usually ranged from 500 to 700 freedpeople, while

Freedmen's Village lost only two residents each day from a population that hovered between 1, 500 to 2, 200.⁴⁴

Arlington freedpeople also escaped several of the hardships that limited the freedom of contrabands throughout the South. The Village's fortunate geographic proximity to Washington insulated Arlington residents from the ravages and disruptions of battle and troop movements that destroyed camps throughout Virginia and the Mississippi Valley. Arlington's favorable location also guaranteed a fairly consistent military presence that prevented the widespread slave-catching and reenslavement that freedpeople in less secure areas faced. Furthermore, a contraband camp adjacent to Washington on Robert E. Lee's estate almost naturally became a publicity magnet that pragmatic government officials could advance as a "model" camp. Finally, the lack of a large nearby Unionist slave-holding class initially held off the emergence of a contract labor system like those implemented in loyal areas such as Virginia's Eastern Shore and in occupied regions like Louisiana and various locations in the Mississippi basin that fell under the control of Ulysses S. Grant's army.⁴⁵

Despite these crucial benefits, Freedmen's Village never developed into a truly autonomous experiment in free labor; historians who have emphasized the conservative nature of post-war Reconstruction under the Freedmen's Bureau at Arlington could readily root their findings in the limited version of "freedom" that emerged during the war itself. Indeed, immediately upon the Village's establishment, the army officials and camp superintendents in charge of the Village ignored free labor ideology entirely by instituting a restrictive wage labor system designed

primarily to exploit black labor for the benefit of the federal government and the Union army. Wages were entirely non-negotiable. Freedpeople received a monthly wage of \$10, \$5 of which was automatically funneled into the expanding Contraband Fund. Meanwhile, black families were required to supply a monthly rent of \$3, leaving the majority of laborers with a perilously scanty income.

Moreover, Villagers exercised minimal control over the labor process; agricultural workers were often forcibly removed from their farms and employed as street-sweepers or "whitewashers" in Washington. Likewise, Arlington military officials displayed a disturbing tendency to spontaneously remove freedpeople and coerce them into cleaning hospital cesspools and toilets and digging graves at the National Cemetery at Arlington.⁴⁶ Sporadic military impressment also limited freedom at the Village. The few able-bodied men residing in Arlington were "for months exceedingly annoyed" by Union troops who entered the camp "under various false pretences, such as visiting friends and relatives," only to "indiscriminately" apprehend freedpeople and force them into military service. Ironically, the most devastating act of impressment was committed by members of a black regiment who were offered a profitable bounty payment for each freedman they were able to "enlist."⁴⁷

On the "autonomous" farms themselves, the army and the War Department employed white "overseers" and sternly reminded them that "you, not [the freedpeople] will decide when they are to work and when not!" Any freedperson guilty of disobeying an overseer was immediately imprisoned in the Village guardhouse and fed only "bread and water until they [were] willing to obey orders."⁴⁸

Furthermore, Village superintendent Danforth B. Nichols was notorious among the freedpeople because of his penchant for violence and abuse. Village resident Lewis Johnson testified that

A woman in camp had a little child; Nichols told [the woman] she must go to work and she told him she was not ready to go to work; he told her she was and that she must do so; the woman did not go to work, so Mr. Nichols beat the woman out the camp with one of the soldier's sword canes and his fist. I can not tell the number of persons he used to abuse, but there were a great many.⁴⁹

By mid-1864, Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs admitted that Village farming "was done by women and the infirm" but defended this policy by asserting that farming "does not require strength of hand." Moreover, freedpeople were specifically prohibited from selling their farm products, since the Village's agricultural produce was mostly reserved for Union troops. Furthermore, mobility was severely circumscribed; artisans and farmers were not permitted to travel to nearby markets in Washington and Alexandria without a pass issued by the Village Superintendent, a luxury that was seldom granted.⁵⁰

In an effort to obtain their version of freedom, Village blacks consistently protested these restrictive policies favored by army officials. Freedpeople repeatedly questioned the propriety of the Contraband Fund and the Village's steep rents. Many women professed their inability to afford the rent and taxation, accurately claiming that their husbands' military labor frequently went unpaid. One Village woman indignantly informed a camp superintendent that "I give up my child upon the word and honor of this government to go and tote his musket and he had gone and lost his life. I think Sir that is enough."⁵¹ Village farmers also illegally sold and traded crops and other marketable goods to local residents, a commonplace violation of Village

policy that elicited several angry official documents reminding Village guards to "stop any peddlers about Freedmen's Village from selling or buying clothing and rags" and other practical necessities such as stoves, farm produce, and beds.⁵²

Most important, Village blacks vehemently protested against the irrational and violent punishments meted out by Superintendent Danforth Nichols, an effort that led to Nichols's dismissal. In the most infamous case of physical abuse, Lucy Ellen Johnson testified that

[Nichols and his guards] fastened a rope around my two thumbs and passing it over the limb of a tree raised me from the ground so that my weight was suspended by the thumbs...They then took it off and tied it on my wrist--again raising me as before with arms outstretched and without any power to relieve myself--In this position one kicked me, another choked my throat, another stuffed dirty wool in my mouth. After nearly half an hour they released me and (Nichols) advised me to leave the camp.

Nichols apparently beat and abused Johnson simply because she requested her daily rations despite suffering from an illness that had prevented her from farming that day, and because she was married to a military laborer whose wages (which she had not yet received) theoretically should have been used to purchase sufficient food.⁵³

Unfortunately, Lucy Johnson was not alone; a black shoemaker named Henry Cook expressed his desire to market his goods in Washington rather than perform monotonous agricultural labor by telling an overseer, "I was a free man and could do what I pleased." The next day, the overseer demanded retribution for this "uppity" remark: "You damn nigger you come out here and God damn if you don't I will kill you with this stick!" Cook obeyed and was struck in the head, the blow sending him sprawling to the ground. The guard pinned Cook down and "began to pound me in my head and face with his fist, and then just took his two thumbs and commenced to

gouge right into my eyes and tried to gouge them out." Cook was hospitalized for two weeks following the beating, and upon his release was immediately dismissed from the Village for refusing to perform the mandated agricultural labor.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, several frightened freedpeople testified that Nichols's rage resulted from his excessive drinking, while another tellingly stated that "My master was a first rate man...I would rather be under him by ten degrees than be with Nichols."⁵⁵

Enough damning evidence was compiled to justify transferring Nichols away from Freedmen's Village, but overall, freedpeople were unsuccessful in their attempts to create an independent free labor community. While Freedmen's Village remained substantially safer and healthier than the vast majority of Union contraband camps, its residents were never truly "contented" or "delighted," and the Village itself never resembled "a miniature city" or a semi-autonomous community of free laborers. Throughout the war, Village officials were primarily motivated by military and financial concerns rather than by any allegiance to free labor or sympathy for the struggling freedmen. Consequently, they implemented a closely monitored and controlled wage labor process designed to fatten the federal budget, feed Union soldiers, and transform the "mass" of "idle" freedmen who would otherwise become a "dead weight on the government" into profit-making laborers.

Indeed, throughout the war, physical conditions deteriorated and labor policies became increasingly restrictive. The initial spaciousness and low mortality rates of Freedmen's Village actually undermined its long-term potential; the contrast between conditions at Arlington and those in the District quickly became so blatant that the government relocated thousands of suffering Washington contrabands to Freedmen's

Village throughout the duration of the war. The largest single transfer involved the Camp Barker freedpeople, who arrived at the Village in January of 1864 in "a most destitute and uncleanly condition," looking "shamelessly wretched," with many residents "fatally ill with small pox." Disgusted and sympathetic onlookers described a depressing mass of "poorly clad, filthy contrabands destitute of necessary bedding" and wearing "barely enough clothing to preserve decency." In an observation that revealed the superior conditions of Freedmen's Village even as it foreshadowed the imminent decline in those conditions, H. E. Simmons (an inspector from the Office of the Quartermaster General) remarked that at Arlington, "[the contrabands] are neat, tidy, and very comfortable, while [at Camp Barker] they were dirty, discontented, and uncomfortable."⁵⁶

Dozens of destitute Washington wives of black soldiers and military laborers also sought and gained admission to Freedmen's Village throughout the war. Women whose distant husbands earned unreliable army wages were often left to provide for children without a dependable income of their own. When these District women sank into poverty and starvation, they frequently applied for government rations and financial assistance. The government's response became predictable: "I have no authority to simply provide rations for wives of colored soldiers and teamsters--recommend they apply to Freedmen's Village instead." This policy strengthened gender hierarchies within the black community; black women were increasingly seen as helpless dependents, while black men were offered more lucrative jobs in the public sphere. Indeed, as the war proceeded, Freedmen's Village essentially became a refuge for elderly men, children, and women who were deemed unfit for military

service and labor; by 1865, women constituted over 75 percent of the Village's "able-bodied" population.⁵⁷

This incoming population compromised the previously healthy physical conditions at Freedmen's Village. Since the original Villagers occupied the coveted cabins, military officials initially housed the Washington newcomers in crowded outdoor tents that lacked sufficient bedding material and blankets. These lamentable conditions and the harsh winter weather combined to kill many of the new Villagers, especially the elderly and those who slept directly on the frigid ground. Not surprisingly, the new residents accelerated the spread of smallpox throughout the Village and introduced a series of other deadly diseases that were "contracted in the move from the city," including scarlet fever and whooping cough.⁵⁸

The influx of freedpeople also produced a crucial shift in Village labor policy. Since the Village could not feasibly hold the expanding population, military supervisors decided to deviate from their initial vision of Freedmen's Village as a profitable experiment in controlled agricultural labor and transformed the Village into a temporary depot for potential dependent laborers and domestic servants who could be contractually "bound out" to private employers throughout the country. This labor policy would be accelerated after 1865 by the Freedmen's Bureau, but it began in earnest during the wartime administration, a critical issue of timing that has been overlooked by historians who mistakenly portray wartime Village policy as static. Indeed, by mid-1864, the military had already transformed nearby Mason's (now Roosevelt's) Island into a temporary holding ground for those Village residents most likely to be hired by the private employers who visited the island.

Though the contract system substituted private wage labor for publicly monitored work, the practical results of this change for freedpeople were minimal. Military and Bureau officials simply kicked contrabands out of the Village and forced them to sign restrictive one-year contracts with local planters. As a result, freedpeople were robbed of any opportunity for economic advancement and instead placed against their will into positions of economic dependency under racist Southern planters.

Investigators from the Inspector General's Office found the conditions at Mason's Island quite appalling—especially compared with conditions in the original Village. Freedpeople were "promiscuously herded" into crowded military barracks, the island's water supply was dangerously low, and the inspectors complained of rapidly spreading disease, the "entire absence of proper drainage," and the disgusting and unsanitary "accumulation of garbage" on the island. A restrictive pass system also limited geographic mobility.⁵⁹

More distressing to military officers on the island was the fact that interested employers initially refused to hire Island freedpeople, since most were "women with small children" or "too old for usefulness." Consequently, army officers and newly-hired Island Superintendent Danforth B. Nichols (quickly rehired after his initial dismissal) took a more forceful and direct role in contract labor negotiations. A second (and equally outraged) investigator from the Inspector's Office noted that Nichols and his advisors endeavored to "get rid of [the freedpeople] in any way, often by throwing them upon the community at large." Nichols convinced the government

to print hundreds of identical apprenticeship and labor contracts that required only the signature of an Island official. A typical contract was frighteningly simple:

Elias Greene, Chief Quartermaster of the Department of Washington, has placed and bound out as an apprentice _____ to learn the trade of _____ until _____.

Labor contracts were identical and almost always included the obligation that freedpeople and employers contract "for not less than one year." A few contracts required employers to "comfortably maintain and properly treat" their charges, and also warned that reports of "abuse and misuse" would result in the termination of the contract, though it is unclear how thoroughly officials enforced these requirements.⁶⁰

However, island officials apparently bound out freedpeople with minimal judgment or concern for their financial and physical well-being. From July 1864 to March 1865, the permanent population of both Freedmen's Village and Mason's Island dropped precipitously: the number of freedpeople in Arlington declined from 2,200 to 1,400 over this eight-month period; that of Mason's Island fell from 1,200 to 500.⁶¹ Moreover, with the exception of a few domestic servants hired by wealthy Northern families, the large majority of black apprentices and farmers were contracted to nearby Maryland and Virginia planters, often with disastrous results. One man returned to Freedmen's Village and testified that his employer "picked up some bricks, beat him upon the head, knocked him down, cut him with an axe, and cowhided him" after a dispute over wages. Another Mason's Island freedman reported that after three months of plantation labor, "he was driven off without any pay," while several parents helplessly objected to the apprenticing of their children.⁶²

Freedpeople resisted these changes in a variety of ways. As noted above, several left their private employers and returned to Arlington requesting a more equitable employment situation or permanent status as Village farmers. Skilled freedpeople seeking to avoid contract labor simply left the Village and opened individual or cooperative shops in Washington, while others found paying jobs in District warehouses, hospitals, hotels, and restaurants.

Most important, Village residents who dreaded both oppressive contract labor and a return to economic stagnation in Washington steadfastly refused to leave the relatively healthy and stable Village. One army official on Mason's Island claimed that the deplorable conditions there were actually "good because it would be harder to get [the freedpeople] to leave for service if they were at Freedmen's Village, because there they have comfortable houses to live in and therefore most of those negroes are unwilling to go out to service." Likewise, Elias Greene complained that "freedmen cannot be induced to take service with private farms and endeavor to return to Freedmen's Village."⁶³ Though the Village proper was no free labor paradise, Arlington freedmen decided early-on that they preferred the stability and pseudo-independence of renting and farming government land to the "freedom" of the private "free labor" economy.

Thus, despite idealistic government and newspaper rhetoric, Freedmen's Village was never an idyllic free labor paradise where freedpeople "delighted" in the "pure country air" and could be seen "working as free men and women." The Village itself was nothing more than an exploitative labor camp erected mostly because military officials had to do *something* with a growing number of freedpeople who

could not (initially) be foisted upon local planters. When that solution became insufficient and the Village became overcrowded, military officials resorted to the solution used throughout the occupied South: forced contract labor. Both policies were designed with government self-interest in mind, and both worked against the wishes of Arlington freedpeople who sought economic independence and land ownership.

Thus, contemporaries who idealized the Village's wartime conditions and historians who have made similar errors or focused almost exclusively on the postwar administration of the Freedmen's Bureau have ignored the total inapplicability of free labor ideology in wartime Arlington. Likewise, historians have not provided a thorough analysis of the decidedly conservative education provided by American Tract Society missionaries.

"You must think of these things, and think kindly of your old master. You have grown up with him, it may be, on the same plantation. Do not fall out now, but join your interests if you can, and live and die together."

-Plain Counsels for Freedmen, a textbook published by the American Tract Society

"Don't refuse to work then, even at low wages. Work at low wage is better than idleness."

-Friendly Counsels for Freedmen, a textbook published by the American Tract Society

The few historians who have examined Freedmen's Village briefly mention the existence of a missionary school; a couple join Village officials in celebrating the "commodious" buildings and the "good furniture" that separated Village schools from other facilities that used dilapidated church basements or tiny military barracks.⁶⁴ However, historians have overlooked the conservative and paternalistic tone of Tract Society education that focused on moral reformation and attempted to discourage

blacks from pursuing economic gain. Indeed, the educational philosophy of the Tract Society dovetailed nicely with the economic beliefs of Village officials, a unique occurrence that allowed Tract Society missionaries to operate with an unprecedented degree of independence. While the Sea Island "Gideonites" and liberal American Missionary Association teachers in the Mississippi Valley often clashed with meddlesome military supervisors and local planters, there is no record of any similar ideological disputes at Freedmen's Village.⁶⁵

Given the Tract Society's historical background, this unique rapport with conservative government officials is not surprising. In 1825, members of the New York and New England Tract Societies decided to combine their efforts by forming the American Tract Society and moving its headquarters to the heart of Manhattan. The Tract Society was strictly non-partisan and its members devoted themselves solely to the distribution of religious or religious-themed tracts by authors as diverse as Jonathan Edwards and Lewis Tappan.

Though the Society aimed to convert America's downtrodden immigrants and freedpeople, the ATS kept a safe distance from the abolitionist movement. Throughout the contentious 1850s, the Society's publishing committee staunchly refused to publish any tracts critical of slavery, since the Society's Constitution specified that tracts must be "calculated to receive the approbation of all evangelical Christians," including Southern slaveholders.⁶⁶ However, by 1857, slavery agitation in Kansas and Nebraska motivated radical members of the Society to lobby for a tract outlining the "moral evils of slavery." The result was the ambivalent "Duties of Masters," which supported the South's peculiar institution but encouraged

paternalistic masters to treat slaves humanely and provided masters with advisory chapters regarding "the correction of servants when they go amiss."⁶⁷ Moderate Society members were uncomfortable with the "radical" tone of the tract, while abolitionist members of the AMA and American Antislavery Society labeled the ATS an "enemy of liberty, and the bulwark of oppression."⁶⁸

Internal strife between conservatives and moderate anti-slavery members culminated at the Society's annual meeting in 1858, where a few inflammatory abolitionist speeches further divided the ATS. After the convention, the organization split into two factions based mostly on the slavery issue. However, the two Tract Societies were not drastically different; money and members overlapped between the two, and the "anti-slavery" Boston society continually displeased abolitionist groups by trumpeting Union and the preservation of "the best government God ever made" as the primary goals of the Civil War while failing to embrace the Emancipation Proclamation.⁶⁹

Given this moderate background, it is not surprising that paternalistic moralism defined the educational philosophy of Tract Society teachers and schools. Tract Society textbooks warned freedpeople about frivolous spending, especially since "Some of your people who have comfortable clothing, when they get a little money, go and spend it for more clothes that look a little nicer, so that they can make a fine show at Church."⁷⁰ Textbooks with condescending titles like *Advice to Freedmen* and *Plain Counsels for Freedmen* were largely devoted to religious and ethical lessons. Popular texts reminded freedpeople that they must "be truthful and honest," that "one of the greatest failings of your people is a want of punctuality," that

drinking alcohol was a terrible sin, and that cleanliness was an important virtue.⁷¹

These moral exhortations were supplemented with spelling lessons, arithmetic primers, and rudimentary biological descriptions of various animals. Only the most advanced textbook (Lydia Maria Child's *The Freedmen's Book*) contained somewhat sophisticated biographies of black historical figures, while the most commonly published and distributed teaching materials were mostly moralistic and contained few other educational lessons. Indeed, even *The Freedmen's Spelling Book* and the various *Freedman's Readers* featured a mixture of standard educational lessons and "temperance songs," Biblical anecdotes, and lists of sins to be avoided.⁷²

Weekly and monthly Tract newspapers and pamphlets distributed at the Village carried similar messages. *The Freedman's Journal* and *The Freedman's Advocate* typically devoted a single page of each issue to basic math and spelling lessons, reserving the several remaining pages for Biblical stories about "The Prodigal Son" and other topics and written lectures about "thrift," prayer, and the importance of stabilized, legal marriages. Interestingly, even the spelling lessons sometimes focused on words like "divine" and "omnipotent," and a copy of the Ten Commandments appeared regularly in each publication.⁷³ Even visiting teacher and famous charity worker Sojourner Truth publicly ordered Arlington freedpeople to "be clean, for cleanliness is next to godliness," chastised them for "living in disgrace off the government," and privately complained that the freedpeople were "very ignorant in relation to house-keeping" and sorely lacked "industry" and "independence."⁷⁴

Though these exhortations on work ethic and moral virtue were common among most abolitionists, the Tract Society's theories of labor and economics

remained relatively conservative. Though Tract Society teachers did not actively coerce Arlington freedpeople into signing contracts or laboring for the government (as did military and Bureau officials), their teaching philosophies lent tacit approval to the government policy of forcing freedpeople to reside (permanently) on the bottom rung of Virginia's economic ladder. Textbooks emphasized "the importance of complying strictly with your contracts," and several textbooks and pamphlets reminded freedpeople that "the greater part of the freedmen will employ themselves in farming. We think of them as plowing, sowing, planting, hoeing, weeding, digging, haying, and harvesting." Most tellingly, Tract Society missionaries openly encouraged freedpeople to sign labor contracts with ex-masters, even when contractual terms seemed unfavorable. Missionaries attempted to assuage black fears by assuring freedpeople that they "should have confidence in masters" and that they "need not be afraid to sign any contract which a master will sign first."⁷⁵

Missionaries also advised freedpeople on the importance of avoiding economic self-interest:

Some of you may object to signing contracts because you think you ought to have more...Had freedom come to you at the beginning of the year, the planter could have done much more for you. You could have raised more corn, could have raised even a fine crop of cotton to help both you and the planter. But, your freedom came too late for this, so you must now make the best of it; you can try to do better for next year.

Another textbook simply reminded freedpeople not to "refuse to work, even at low wages. Work at low wages is better than idleness."⁷⁶

Thus, Tract Society missionaries and Village officials each defined black freedom in very limited terms; freedpeople were intended for subordinate agricultural labor governed by restrictive contracts and overseen by planters. This conservative

educational philosophy conflicted with the more traditional ideological basis of District schools administered by the AMA and the National Freedmen's Relief Association, which offered "a thorough English and classical education" equivalent to that "taught in our best Academies."⁷⁷

Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to know how Village blacks responded to Tract Society teachings. School attendance was apparently exemplary among both adults and children, declining only as the overall population of the Village decreased beginning in mid-1864. While Village blacks were undoubtedly eager to obtain much-needed literacy, they simultaneously expressed their rejection of the limited Tract Society version of "freedom" in their determined efforts to acquire the benefits of liberty and free labor. Many Arlington freedpeople also ignored missionary lectures on the importance of documented legal marriage; missionaries and teachers constantly criticized the tendency of Village men and women to "take up" with each other in "promiscuous" common law marriages. Although the effect of Tract Society philosophy on the minds of black students is impossible to ascertain, historians who have blindly celebrated the spacious Tract Society school and the "eagerness" of Arlington's black students have overlooked the Society's rejection of free labor ideology and the limited model of freedom that the Society's missionaries and textbooks proposed.⁷⁸

"She is a woman of disreputable character, and of that class of women here who entertains the idea that freedom means to do and say what they please. This woman, having been acting disgracefully, and the reason I placed her in the guardhouse was that she told me that I had no control over her actions that she was free, and could and would do as she pleased."

-Village superintendent describing Village resident Caroline Shelton, April 1867.

Though previous historians have focused almost exclusively on the conservative nature of Freedmen's Bureau policy at the Village, Bureau officials simply accelerated the already ongoing process of removing Village freedpeople by encouraging them to sign private labor contracts or evicting them from the Village with little prior notice. However, the Bureau devised harsher and more effective means for accomplishing this goal. Bureau officials supplemented a more thorough contract labor system by intentionally eliminating the physical and environmental advantages of the Village. First, Village superintendents demanded that nearly everyone perform mandatory agricultural labor; many elderly and infirm patients were removed from the Home and hospital and forced into field labor, and several handicapped and crippled residents had their labor exemptions revoked. Freedpeople claiming that their physical disabilities or age prevented them from performing mandated labor and chores were summarily evicted. Government officials also fired and evicted freedpeople who had previously served as paid hospital laborers and "washerwomen," while those lucky enough to retain their non-agricultural jobs and residences worked without remuneration.

By the end of 1866, wages for all agricultural laborers were eliminated, and daily food rations were cut in half. In addition, Bureau officials suddenly demanded that all rent payments be submitted one week *prior* to the first of each month, a policy that seemed unreasonable to freedpeople who no longer received regular wages and often had to wait for months until distant husbands and fathers were able to send a portion of their military wages. Those who failed to furnish the appropriate rent payments faced immediate eviction.⁷⁹

The Bureau also allowed the physical conditions of the Village to deteriorate. By late 1866, Bureau investigators sympathetic toward the freedpeople reported that Village residents could only make a "scanty living," and that the Village cabins were "exceedingly filthy" and suffered from leaky roofs and a disagreeable odor. Bureau investigators also declared that Village privies were "unfit for use," and noted that the Home for the aged and infirm was becoming notorious for its "insufficient accommodations and heating." Inspectors found that "all the heating stoves are broken and worthless," forcing "uncomfortable" residents of the Home to "huddle over" the single functioning stove. Consequently, mortality rates among infants and elderly Villagers increased markedly beginning in 1866, while Mason's Island remained a deplorable haven for disease, crowding, and high mortality rates.⁸⁰

Though a few Bureau officials and investigators tried their best to expose the new rigid policies and declining conditions at the Village, they amounted to a tiny faction whose bureaucratic whistle-blowing could not overcome the widely-held desire to dismantle the Village. Indeed, despite these reports, Bureau officials in Arlington continued the effort to eliminate the black "financial burden" by relocating freedpeople on nearby plantations without regard for their physical safety or financial well-being. One Bureau official declared that "blacks should go back into the country, both in Virginia and Maryland, to find work!"⁸¹ Like their wartime predecessors, Bureau agents in Alexandria County and Mason's Island forced freedpeople to sign labor contracts with local planters. Records from Mason's Island indicate that laborers and apprentices invariably found work with planters (often former slaveowners) in Maryland and Virginia, and that the majority (over 85

percent) of contracted adults were women, many of them separated from their children. Mothers with infants and dependent children were usually "unable to obtain jobs" and were either evicted or left to "live in rags" on Mason's Island until more generous employers arrived.⁸²

Letters and petitions sent to the Bureau by contracted workers reveal that Virginia and Maryland employers were unwilling to provide freedpeople with the benefits and liberties ideally associated with free labor. Several ex-Villagers received scanty wages of \$8 or less per month, while others were dismissed without payment. When one freedman inquired about unpaid wages, his employer "knocked him down with the back of an axe" and informed the worker that his wages were being withheld because "he was not in the fields early enough."⁸³ An unlucky apprentice revealed that he was "treated badly, whipped, and ill-fed,"⁸⁴ while another freedman working in Maryland complained "of not receiving any compensation for my services--no clothing, no chance for school--nothing but whippings."⁸⁵ The same man also claimed that he was "struck with a shovel, injuring my head very badly" after he was unable to repair a broken cooking stove. A group of Village freedpeople "bound out" to Arkansas planters endured similar hardships.⁸⁶

Freedpeople did not passively submit to these efforts to remove them from the Village. Led by black Village preacher Robert Laws, Arlington freedpeople fiercely protested the new harsh work orders and widespread evictions. Residents held a series of conventions during which they labeled the Bureau a collection of "copperheads" who "took all our wages away" and unfairly reduced rations to a dangerously low level. Laws and several other respected black leaders denounced the

Bureau for "turning us out as if we were brutes," and pointedly reminded Bureau officials that "women who have lost husbands and sons to the causes of liberty and Civil War are being evicted!" Individual freedpeople criticized the Bureau for "requiring those who are too much incapacitated to do work they can't perform," while Laws and other literate leaders wrote petitions on behalf of those who had been "put out of doors" and had their "furniture thrown in the street" for failing to submit rent payments in advance. Petitions and letters of complaint poignantly related stories of "old people here thrown out in the cold" without "even a shirt to their name."⁸⁷

Most importantly, Village residents boldly staked their claim to independent land ownership rights. Reverend Laws encouraged his followers to petition Congress for permanent residency at the Village, reminding listeners that their rent payments and monthly contributions to the Contraband Fund had "built this [camp]." Villagers urged Congress to allow "us to judge who should stay and be removed," and Laws and a group of petitioners informed Congress that "you need not find [Village freedpeople] one ration or clothe [sic]," and that Villagers were prepared for Congress to "rest some of the responsibilities on US!"⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the few able-bodied residents who had accumulated significant incomes successfully convinced Bureau officials to lease 280 acres of Village farmland to residents willing to pay \$1 per acre. A few dozen families thus became semi-independent leaseholders, while many of the evicted freedpeople built shanties and cultivated abandoned land located just outside the boundaries of the Village.⁸⁹

Many freedpeople simply continued to avoid the contract system entirely. Government officials admitted that "by far the greatest difficulty is between freedmen and white people relating to contracts and arises often from there being no settled and definite contracts made...Freedmen apparently receive ideas that are entirely different from what was intended." Thus, many literate freedmen simply refused to participate in any contractual agreements, while others were allowed to reenter Freedmen's Village after government inquiries revealed "deliberate intention on the part of some employers to swindle them."

Black leaders also circumvented the Bureau's contract system by privately negotiating with Northern employers who needed domestic servants and laborers.⁹⁰ Thus, Rev. Laws often traveled to Connecticut and Massachusetts with Village residents seeking employment, while Sojourner Truth found several families in upstate New York who could provide "good places" and fair wage rates for black women and children. Overall, those Villagers fortunate enough to find employment in the Northeast seem to have fared better than their counterparts in the South, but at least one freedman returned from Tarrytown, New York, after his designated family "had no place to put him."⁹¹

In their efforts to become independent landowners and avoid unfair labor contracts, Village blacks articulated their own alternative version of freedom, one that was very different than the "freedom" proposed by Village officials and local planters. Blacks envisioned a post-slavery economy based on independence and land ownership. By rejecting dependent contractual relationships and agitating for permanent Village residency, Arlington freedpeople staked their claim to economic

independence and tried to create a self-sufficient agricultural community that could exist somewhat separately from the broader wage-based market economy.⁹²

These efforts were at best only partially successful. While a minority of Bureau officials questioned the "unnecessary severity of the order that all unemployed must leave" and opposed the evictions of those who were unable to pay rent in advance, Village policy remained essentially unchanged throughout 1867.⁹³ The unemployed continued to be evicted, rations were never increased, wage labor was entirely eliminated, and advance rent payment remained a prerequisite for continued residency. In addition, Rev. Laws was deemed an unwanted agitator and expelled from the Village in early 1867, robbing the freedpeople of their most respected and influential leader. Those enterprising freedpeople who constructed their own shanties and farms beyond the boundaries of the Village proper were removed to Washington to fend for themselves and had their houses destroyed.

Sensing the hopelessness of their existence in Arlington, many freedpeople voluntarily left, moving to nearby Washington or resigning themselves to a year of contract labor under a local planter.⁹⁴

As the black population dwindled throughout 1867 and the Freedmen's Bureau neared expiration, the government moved to dismantle the Village entirely, threatening to sell the buildings and evict the remaining freedpeople, a group composed of able-bodied leaseholders and their families. In a last-ditch effort to acquire some semblance of true land ownership, these freedpeople appealed for a delay and eventually convinced federal officials to extend their leases for two additional years. When those leases finally expired in 1870, the government refused

to renew them but allowed the freedpeople to remain settled on the Arlington estate on the condition that "they are to acquire no title to the land and are to move when required." Under these terms, the freedpeople lived relatively unmolested until the early 1880s, when a series of legal cases and property disputes began which resulted in their official expulsion in 1900, though most of the remaining freedpeople vacated the Village during the 1890s. While the ex-"contrabands" and their descendants were ultimately compensated for the value of their dwellings and their earlier contributions to the long-defunct Contraband Fund, their final eviction merely highlighted their continued inability to achieve true freedom and independence.⁹⁵

The post-war story of Arlington freedmen paralleled that of freedmen throughout the South. For the majority of Village blacks, postwar Reconstruction administered by the Freedmen's Bureau produced an incomplete version of freedom that failed to satisfy their desire for land ownership and economic independence. Like freedpeople throughout most of the South, Villagers were either left to fend for themselves without a sufficient economic foundation or coerced into signing restrictive one-year contracts that left them landless and vulnerable to oppressive and unreasonable white planters.

This was not simply a postbellum phenomenon; Freedmen's Village had *never* developed into an idyllic community of independent laborers, and wartime military officials and Village superintendents never embraced or even applied free labor ideology at the Village itself. Motivated primarily by budgetary concerns and their fears that freedpeople would constitute a financially burdensome population, Village

officials designed a "profitable" system at the expense of the long-term economic well-being of the freedmen, who were denied sufficient wages, economic independence, and land ownership.

Reporters, government officials, and modern historians who celebrated the wartime "golden age" of Freedmen's Village have overlooked the extremely low wages, exorbitant rent charges, harsh restrictions on mobility, and verbal and physical abuse that circumscribed the black "freedom" that emerged in Arlington from 1863 to 1865. Indeed, while the Village certainly deserved praise for its relatively healthy and sanitary physical conditions, its labor policies resembled those of less celebrated camps where blacks were denied land ownership and control over the labor process itself. Freedmen's Village officials refused to emulate the more liberal labor experiments utilized on the South Carolina Sea Islands and Davis Bend plantation.

The overcrowding of the Village after 1863 resulted in the development of a repressive contract labor system that usually placed freedpeople in dependent economic positions--a scenario that became the hallmark of postwar Reconstruction. Consequently, the Village more accurately fits the "halfway house" concept proposed by Louis Gerteis and other historians; Arlington freedpeople successfully struggled to eradicate the vestiges of chattel slavery, but were unable to obtain the full benefits of liberty and free labor. Despite the determined efforts of freedpeople who sought their own version of freedom, government policy at Freedmen's Village and Mason's Island anticipated the tragic failures of post-war Reconstruction throughout the South.

Chapter 2: "Negroes are Hired Out for Merely a Pittance": Contract Labor on the Eastern Shore

"[Residents of the Eastern Shore] think if we go among them it will be to steal and emancipate their negroes. When these apprehensions are corrected the reaction in our favor must be great."

-Major General John A. Dix, president of the Union Defense Committee, November 8, 1861.⁹⁶

At the outset of the Civil War, Union officials handled potentially secessionist slaveholders on Virginia's Eastern Shore with caution, hoping to secure a teetering Unionist region that would help guarantee the tenuous loyalty of neighboring Maryland. This cautious and pragmatic approach would define the federal government's "contraband" policy along the Eastern Shore; while Union officials willingly confiscated abandoned land for contraband agricultural settlements in openly disloyal regions, the overriding aim of preserving fragile Shore Unionism prevented similar developments in Northampton and Accomac counties.

Thus, while freedpeople in mainland Freedmen's Village, the Mississippi Valley, and the South Carolina Sea Islands labored on temporary agricultural settlements under varying degrees of freedom, Shore freedpeople were almost immediately forced into private contract labor in order to please local white employers. Shore freedpeople became some of the first to experience the limits of post-emancipation economic "freedom" as defined by oppressive private contracts and limited government intervention.

Interaction between federal officials and Shore residents began in late 1861, when worried Union officials took notice of increased secessionist activity on the Shore. In several letters written during the summer of 1861, Major General John A. Dix warned his superiors of "a camp of secessionists, variously estimated from one thousand to three thousand men" on the Shore. Dix worried that the well-organized and heavily armed secessionists were becoming "active and confident," and complained that Shore Unionists were "discontented and to some extent depressed." Most important, Dix worried that the loss of Virginia's Eastern Shore (still nominally Unionist) would jeopardize the loyalty of Maryland. Dix repeatedly warned Lincoln's closest advisors that "the Eastern Shore of Maryland [is] in great danger," that it was "defenseless," and that local Maryland Unionists were "unable to arrest the secessionists that are now passing in great numbers through that section to the Eastern Shore of Virginia, where the Confederates are getting together a pretty formidable force."⁹⁷

For the excitable Dix, Virginia's Eastern Shore was the linchpin of Unionism in the Chesapeake; the fall of Northampton and Accomac to secessionism would lead to the loss of an already divided Maryland, and, ultimately, the defeat of the Union cause. Dix urged Union officials to take action. For months, Dix sent apocalyptic letters to Secretary of War Simon Cameron, General George McClellan, and several other Union officials, recommending that "three or four regiments...be sent [to the Eastern Shore]...to break up this camp of secessionists...The exhibition of such a force and the destruction of the secession camp would have a salutary effect throughout the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia." After a few months of

military inaction, Dix again suggested that "there be prompt and decisive action...It is extremely desirable to have a decided demonstration of force [on the Eastern Shore] by the 1st of November..." he continued. "The election in this State comes off on the 6th, and our Union friends in [Northampton and Accomac counties] are disheartened and in danger of being overawed by...these rebel organizations."⁹⁸

Though the upcoming elections were merely contests for the usual local and county posts, they were nonetheless crucial, since they were largely contested between unionist and secessionist candidates seeking to control the politics and courts of the Shore, not to mention the overall tenor of Shore life. With such high stakes hanging in the balance, Dix was finally given permission to organize a military expedition to the Shore. The conciliatory tone of the bloodless expedition and its emphasis on encouraging Unionism rather than punishing disloyalty set the tone for Union policy that would largely cater to the interests of whites on the Shore. Dix provided commanding General H. H. Lockwood with a force of 3,500 men that was explicitly designed to "overawe the opposition." Moreover, Dix assured President Lincoln that the expedition would proceed by "giving [Shore whites] the strongest assurance of kind treatment and protection if they do not resist the authority of the Government...I trust--I ought to say I hope rather than I trust--that they may be gained over without bloodshed." Dix reminded General Lockwood that "your force is intended for the protection of loyal and peaceable citizens; you will see that it is not perverted by the misconduct of anyone under your command to their annoyance." Dix added force to this warning by ordering Lockwood to punish any soldier who

"might commit any outrage on the person or property of any citizen" with a stint "in the irons."⁹⁹

Most important, in a November proclamation to Shore residents, Dix promised that Union troops would not interfere with slavery on the Shore:

The Military Forces of the United States are about to enter your Counties as a part of the Union. They will go among you as friends, and with the earnest hope that they may not, by your own acts, be forced to become your enemies. They will invade no rights of person or property. On the contrary, your laws, your institutions, your usages will be scrupulously respected. There need be no fear that the quietude of any fireside will be disturbed, unless the disturbance is created by yourselves. *Special directions have been given not to interfere with the condition of any persons held to domestic service; and, in order that there may be no ground for mistake or pretext for misrepresentation, commanders have been instructed not to permit any such persons to come within their lines* (italics mine).¹⁰⁰

On the surface, Lockwood's expedition accomplished all of Dix's stated goals. Though the Confederate militia had anticipated the expedition's arrival by burning bridges and "throwing trees across roads," Union troops met no military opposition. Soldiers testified that many of the "rebels were dispersed to their homes," and that a "large body" of the Confederate militia" had fled South...and were trying to escape over to the mainland."

Troop behavior was exemplary; soldiers invited local whites to join in the singing of the national anthem, and Shore whites were provided with "the most abundant compensation for everything that was taken, or claimed to have been taken" by Union soldiers. Newspaper accounts and private diaries indicate that General Lockwood whipped and expelled local slaves who tried to escape from their masters, a gesture that "had much to do with winning back the feelings of these people." One soldier claimed that the expedition had been successful in "restoring confidence to

Unionists and demoralizing the secessionists," an assessment that was apparently validated on election day, when both Eastern Shore counties rejected secession ordinances and instead elected Unionist officials to local posts.¹⁰¹

The outcome of the Dix expedition did not bode well for Shore freedpeople. With local planters in abundance, military officials could bypass Village-style labor camps and move directly to forced contract labor as a means of eliminating public responsibility for the ever-growing class of freedpeople. The coercive nature of the system and the lack of sufficient federal oversight of contracts and labor relations exposed the irrelevance of radical "free labor ideology" in the real world of wartime Reconstruction.

Despite the 1861 election results cited above, the Dix expedition also failed to eradicate secessionism from the Shore. Many Confederates sympathizers simply kept quiet during the expedition and subsequent election, while many others returned periodically from mainland Virginia. Just months after the expedition, General Lockwood himself returned to the Shore and concluded that "the mild and kind policy of General Dix, in-so-far as the building up of loyal sentiment is concerned, has proved a failure." Wartime and postwar violence and labor conflicts quickly exposed the hollow nature of Dix's victory, a "triumph" that left freedpeople to fend for themselves amidst a community of hostile, racist whites.¹⁰²

When army officials returned to investigate labor relations on the Shore in 1863, they found a chaotic situation that required some government action. Military investigators concluded that most Shore residents were "secesh," and warned federal

officials in Washington that Shore whites were "feeding and helping rebel guerillas" and conducting illicit trade with mainland Confederate forces. One army investigator called for immediate reinforcements to prevent the "raids and rumors of raids from rebels on the other side of the [Chesapeake] Bay" and to deal "with plenty of evil disposed persons on the Shore."¹⁰³

Perhaps more pressing was the problematic relationship developing between Shore freedpeople and local whites. Investigators reported that most of the freedpeople on the Shore were "black women and children turned off by masters" who had either fled to the mainland. Moreover, there was no uniform labor policy for freedpeople who remained on local farms; investigators distinguished between freedpeople who were "working at wages" and "others working for their old masters without wages."¹⁰⁴

Thus, by 1863 the bulwark of Unionism had become a region teetering on the brink of large-scale black poverty. Though the Shore remained nominally Unionist, occasional "raids" revealed the depth of racism and secessionism in Northampton and Accomac. Army officials on the Shore (including the Provost Marshal) were also worried about the growing population of landless and unemployed "freed slaves living in idleness," a group that represented a potentially disastrous financial public burden. Army officials did acknowledge that "whites encouraged such disorderliness by refusing to employ or assist Negroes and by treating them cruelly in some instances."¹⁰⁵

Throughout 1863 and early 1864, army officials devised various methods for restoring order to the Eastern Shore. One military official characterized the Shore as

"a virgin field" for black soldiers, and recommended the conscription of all able-bodied males ages 18-45. Meanwhile, Colonel C. S. Henry ordered the construction of a Negro House of Refuge for the infirm, and the military provided rations for "destitute Negroes and soldier's wives," though many were forced to travel over 40 miles to receive their rations. Soldiers herded other women and elderly freedpeople into inadequate makeshift Houses of Refuge. One employee at a Refuge house complained that "I have about 50 [freedpeople] piled into a kitchen and barn...I have nothing for them to eat and no implements for them to work with."¹⁰⁶

This incipient federal charity program was complimented by a rudimentary federal labor program. Military officers stationed at the Office of the Provost Marshal on the Eastern Shore organized unemployed contrabands into geographic "districts" where they would work as farmers on abandoned land. Crucially, the land was not to be controlled by the federal government or the freedpeople themselves; rather, abandoned land was to be leased to local whites who would hire freedpeople on a contractual basis. Army officials added one more harbinger of future problems for freedpeople: they were not allowed to leave their districts—roughly equivalent to Shore towns--without a government-issued passport.¹⁰⁷

By November 1864, army officials were forced to admit that these initial plans had failed. A series of investigators led by new Provost Marshal Col. Frank White concluded that further government action was needed "in order to end the evils on the Shore: the idleness of Negroes and the bad or improper treatment by masters of servants." Local masters often refused to pay wages to black farmhands, a scenario that allegedly resulted in freedpeople "refusing to labor for a livelihood and

subsisting in part by depredations upon the property of others.” Meanwhile, black women and children “were mostly destitute and greatly in need of assistance.”¹⁰⁸

Officials devised a dual strategy to solve the Shore’s growing economic and racial problems. First, Provost White and his military aides essentially forced blacks to engage in contract-based agricultural labor. Beginning on January 1, 1865, soldiers at the Office of the Provost Marshal proclaimed that “all persons over 16 not engaged in employment will report to this office in order that work may be found for them. None who are able to work can be allowed to remain in idleness.” In addition, army officials explicitly ordered “all Negroes” (presumably over 16 years of age) to find employment within thirty days, after which time “employment will be furnished for them.” Federal workers assured local whites that “all persons desiring to procure house servants or field laborers of any kind...will be supplied without delay.”¹⁰⁹

To their credit, soldiers and federal bureaucrats did try to help freedpeople by strictly overseeing contract negotiations between freedpeople and planters. The new regulations outlawed the vague, easily exploited verbal contracts often favored by planters, and prohibited the imposition of wage ceilings for black workers. Moreover, all contracts had to be approved by the federal Superintendent of Labor, and planters were warned that “bad or cruel treatment shall be considered a violation of contract.” Despite these apparent safeguards, army officials limited the mobility of freedpeople by demanding that all contracts be made on a monthly, seasonal, or annual basis, and by allowing “only 1/20th or 1/10th” of the local black population to “hire themselves out as day laborers”—a lucrative opportunity given only to those

freedpeople who could obtain a certificate signed by six local whites who were willing to characterize the individual as “trustworthy.”¹¹⁰

Though a well-organized and closely monitored contract labor system promised potential benefits for unemployed and unpaid freedpeople, the ideological justifications provided by military officials foreshadowed the dangers and limitations of such a system. One official claimed that widespread contract labor would “furnish to the farmers and residents of this Shore, economical and regular labor, and to the colored, a lawful and profitable means of subsistence.” Provost Marshal and Lt. Col. Frank J. White—the architect of the contract plan—echoed these sentiments, trumpeting the system’s potential effectiveness in “solving the want of labor for [Shore] farmers” and “preventing the idleness of Negroes and the concomitant evils of thievery and general demoralization, evils that [contract labor] shall correct by forcing all Negroes to work.”¹¹¹

When evaluating the system in early 1865, White displayed the cultural arrogance and insensitivity typical of mid-nineteenth century white officials, emphasizing that “the education of slavery taught [freedpeople] to have no care for the future...The rights of property to them were a farce.” For White, the legacy of slavery resulted only in “idleness, dishonesty, and disease,” and the contract labor system was the *only* viable method of “social and moral elevation” for Shore freedpeople. Indeed, White dismissed federal philanthropy as “lacking all practical sense,” and rejected the alternative (used at Freedmen’s Village and other openly disloyal areas) of government-sponsored “contraband farms,” since such settlements encouraged the formation of isolated all-black communities that would inevitably

engender “distrust” and suspicion among local whites. Finally, White argued that Shore freedpeople would be helpless within a commercial or industrial economy, since such spheres were dominated by “enterprising men of commerce” and thus represented “labor markets where Africans cannot compete.”¹¹²

These statements make it unmistakably clear that the contract labor system set up on the Eastern Shore was designed primarily to benefit local whites. Military officials were determined to avoid the expensive responsibility of providing direct financial aid to Shore freedpeople, and barely considered supplying freedmen with local land. In their desire to reward “Unionist” Shore farmers with a stable and profitable labor system, federal workers merely echoed the philosophy of the earlier Dix expedition. Likewise, their narrow-minded and condescending characterization of blacks as inferior beings corrupted by slavery and best suited to dependent agricultural labor mirrored the educational philosophy of the American Tract Society.

Not surprisingly, the advantages theoretically offered by the contract labor system melted away when it was actually implemented; without the direct aid of federal officials who consistently avoided intervening in the “free labor” economy, Shore freedpeople suffered from the unfair contracts and blatant exploitation that would define the postbellum black experience throughout the South.

The second element of the 1864 reorganization of the Eastern Shore was a limited charity program. The same November 1864 proclamations issued by the Provost Marshal that outlined the contract labor system also accepted the notion that “assistance in sickness, destitution, or distress shall be given by this government.” The military financed a series of local “asylums” for the aged and infirm, and did

reserve small tracts of land (often adjacent to the asylums) for “government farms to be used only for such as from old age or physical infirmity are absolutely unable to support themselves.” Federal officials approved the formation of public markets that would sell the “necessities of life” at affordable prices, and continued to provide rations for “soldiers’ wives,” “destitute contrabands,” and the inmates of government asylums.¹¹³

Unfortunately, government charity was often insufficient and was gradually reduced still further. The inmates of several asylums were “in very great need of clothing and blankets,” and many hospital patients were eventually forced to work on adjacent government farms. Meanwhile, one farm superintendent regretted that he could “not guarantee shelter” for many of his laborers.

As the war went on, army officials became less willing to provide charity for any freedpeople, regardless of age or physical condition. An edict of January 1865 requested that the superintendents of the Shore’s most prominent government farm (fittingly named for John Dix) send all resident women and children to the local federal office to find contractual employment. A month later, Colonel Frank White suggested that “no issue [of rations] be made at all to the contrabands, except in such special cases of destitution as in any judgment may require assistance.” White then claimed that he could “reduce by one half the current rations if all [freedpeople] are required to work.” A year later, army officials finally limited rations only to “such [freedpeople] as are in a hospital or sick and under treatment by a surgeon.” This solution was supposed to ensure that all Shore freedpeople would “be made to provide for themselves and their families.”¹¹⁴

As was the case at Freedmen's Village, federal officials avoided widespread philanthropy in fear of creating a dependent and financially burdensome black population. Though this fear was certainly justified, freedpeople with limited financial resources and experience could not be expected to succeed without sustained assistance from the federal government. In some respects, the system of contract labor used on the Shore (and elsewhere) was designed specifically to *prevent* freedpeople from having financial success. Military officials ignored other radical alternatives (like land ownership) and instead created a coercive system of contract labor under which local planters essentially "drafted" freedpeople for positions as subordinate laborers—positions that many military officials saw as permanent and just..

Despite promises of increased government regulation, Shore whites used the contract labor system to exploit black laborers. When the Freedmen's Bureau assumed control of Shore labor relations in the spring of 1865, Bureau investigator Stuart Barnes criticized the state of contractual labor relations on the Shore. Barnes said that he would

report favorably on [the contract system] and call it beneficial to the Negro and his employer if properly managed, but I must say that in very many instances the power of the Assistant Superintendent of Labor has been very badly abused and hundreds of Negroes are hired out for merely a pittance, much less than they could earn as day laborers, and much less than the employers acknowledge they are worth.

Barnes also found evidence that army had long been embezzling funds intended for asylums and hospitals, though he admitted that in at least a few asylums "the sick are well-cared for and the accommodations are ample." Barnes did, however, find other hospitals where "enfeebled Negroes" lived in "exceedingly poor accommodations."

White himself conceded that agricultural “employees had not been paid in many instances for seven months, although many of them were poor Negroes whose families were starving while they were working.”¹¹⁵

Available labor contracts from 1864 and 1865 validate Barnes’s pessimistic conclusions. Though White and his military comrades had expected freedpeople to earn approximately \$100 per year, available contracts indicate that most earned well under half that sum (some even less than \$30 for an entire year!), while many others (especially women) were paid nothing after agreeing to contracts that provided only “food, shelter, and clothing” in exchange for labor. Contracts were invariably made for the duration of one year and usually stipulated that time missed due to sickness or physical injury resulted in non-payment of wages. Planters regularly withheld one month’s wages until the final settlement of the contract—an event that planters could intentionally avoid by dismissing freedpeople prior to the termination of the contract or behaving so abusively that workers simply left voluntarily, allowing the employer to simply pocket the final month’s wages.¹¹⁶

Predictably, outraged Shore freedpeople expressed concerns over the emerging system. In early 1865, freedman B. L. Parish, writing “at the most earnest request of all the free men of color of this place,” angrily chastised the federal government for “employing none but the most rabid secessionists” to oversee labor relations on the Eastern Shore. Parish criticized the government for “hiring out by force all the free colored people of this District, including all who were born free.” He claimed that planter reluctance to hire entire families resulted in “parents being forced to hire out sons and daughters,” and asserted that Shore freedpeople were now

“in worse bondage than slaves ever were.” Other documents indicate that army officials did in fact undermine the black family structure by encouraging planters to hire *only* those individual freedpeople who could provide immediate agricultural or domestic labor.¹¹⁷

Freedpeople who could afford to rent land and thus achieve some semblance of independence found this alternative closed off by Shore planters. Bureau investigators found that whites “refuse to rent on such terms and in some cases have offered exorbitant rents to be paid in cash,” an unreasonable demand that forced freedpeople “to hire out their labor to the best employer.” Thus, the contract labor program implemented on the Shore (like Nathaniel Banks’s labor system in Louisiana) foreshadowed the tragic economic marginalization of Southern blacks that would define the Reconstruction years. Federal officials were unwilling to alienate a population of “loyal” whites by confiscating abandoned land or actively monitoring Shore labor relations to ensure that freedmen were treated equitably. The results were predictable; Shore planters used to contract system to closely replicate antebellum slavery and forced freedpeople into positions of economic dependence by refusing to rent or sell land at fair prices. In fact, the writings and rationalizations of some government officials suggest that many of them envisioned an economy in which freedpeople were permanent agricultural laborers—hardly a philosophy that could or should be labeled “free labor ideology.”¹¹⁸

Despite the initial admonitions of Freedmen’s Bureau officials, available evidence suggests that Bureau representatives on the Shore simply continued the labor policies of their wartime predecessors. Though Bureau officials promised to

“watch closely all the contracts that are made” and “annul those which are unjust,” they reminded freedpeople that the Bureau “has but an advisory role relative to contracts” and reiterated their primary desire “to urge the freedmen to have a definitive agreement with employers or landlords.” Bureau representatives admitted that several cases “have been brought before [Bureau courts] principally on account of non-payment of wages,” but assured freedpeople in March 1866 that such injustices would be easily rectified in Bureau courts. Unfortunately, the Bureau closed all of its Shore courts in May 1866, declaring that “all cases, civil and criminal, in this district will hereafter be tried by state courts”—thus guaranteeing that planters would continue to exploit black employees without fear of legal consequences. As briefly noted above, the Bureau also continued wartime reductions in the level of government philanthropy and rations provided to Shore freedpeople.¹¹⁹

By mid-1866, a local Bureau official blindly affirmed that Shore freedpeople lived “in excellent conditions,” a claim that was apparently based on the fact that “all who are able to work are in some lucrative employment.” Contemporary evidence suggests otherwise, and the same Bureau official conceded that “many former slave-masters will hire no black man on his farms, nor will they rent them one foot of ground to cultivate.” Perhaps most telling, the same bureaucrat happily recorded that the “feeling of whites here toward the Bureau is friendly, the whites believing its object to be justice.”¹²⁰

Meanwhile, as they did at Arlington and elsewhere, Shore freedpeople actively resisted government policy and planter exploitation, and, in doing so, articulated their own version of freedom. Like their counterparts at Arlington, Shore

freedpeople sought financial independence and stability through land ownership. Surprised Bureau officials “discovered several places on abandoned land where Negroes have built houses and are cultivating a few areas of land.” Bureau agents either disbanded such settlements or forced their residents to lease or rent the land directly from the federal government.¹²¹

When land ownership was impossible, freedpeople with some means usually sought to rent or lease land from local whites or federal officials. Though most Shore planters feared even this degree of black independence, some freedpeople were able to obtain land by these methods. One local Bureau agent informed his superior in Washington that “many colored persons to whom abandoned land has been leased are exceedingly anxious to ascertain whether the same will be available for the ensuing year, in order that they might make arrangements in preparing their fields for another crop.” Thus, black lessees tried to stake a permanent or at least long-term claim to abandoned Shore land.¹²²

Other freedpeople simply refused to participate in the contract labor system. In early 1865, Col. Frank White complained bitterly about freedman Griffin Collins, “a leader of that small class of colored persons who have since their emancipation, refused to labor for a livelihood, and who have maintained themselves principally by theft.” Collins and the rest of these allegedly unruly freedmen “stirred up publicly as much opposition as possible among the colored people, advising them to refuse to obey!” Perhaps most revealingly, Collins himself was able to rent a sizable farm on which he “employed only freedmen who refused to obey [government] orders.” By renting land and employing other angry freedmen, Collins and his friends

successfully avoided the financial dependence and exploitation that were endemic to the Shore's contract labor system.¹²³

By late 1866, freedpeople who could not afford to rent or lease land found another alternative to the federally imposed contract labor system. In January 1867, Bureau officials and local planters complained that "many of the freedmen declined entry into new employments for the present year." Bureau workers learned that freedpeople "preferred instead to rent small pieces and tracts of land and cultivate them for part of the crop therein, rather than hire themselves out. They have the erroneous idea that if they hire themselves out, they are no longer their own masters." As many scholars have argued, sharecropping thus seems to have emerged as part of a compromise between freedpeople who wanted some degree of control over the labor process (to be "their own masters") and local planters who needed steady labor but could not or would not rent or lease their land to freedmen on a cash basis. The system *initially* offered freedpeople a degree of independence and control that was unattainable within the Shore's contract labor system.¹²⁴

Some Shore freedpeople also acquired or already possessed lucrative artisanal skills that they could use to steer clear of contract labor. While artisans at Freedmen's Village were not permitted to sell their products on the open market, army officials on the Shore proclaimed in January 1865 that "skilled artisans will be permitted to work at such times and places as they may." Officials noted the proliferation of "blacksmiths, carpenters, and shoemakers," and remarked that "many [freedpeople] take up oystering" during appropriate seasons.¹²⁵

Like freedpeople throughout the South, Shore freedpeople also achieved social stability by building strong community institutions. Local blacks turned abandoned or seldom-used churches into active places of worship, and constructed well-attended schools throughout the Shore. One local Bureau official informed Bureau headquarters that “the school referred to is entirely the enterprise of the Negroes. They hired Miss Margaret Strong to teach them, a lady eminently qualified for the position.” He concluded his letter by reiterating that he “had nothing to do with the establishment of this school and will not interfere in this matter.”

Elsewhere along the Shore, officials admired a “new school built by blacks” and organized by a local (black) minister who promised that freedpeople would “graciously supply all the labor” necessary for a functional school. By all accounts, attendance at black schools was “very large,” and students of all ages exhibited “a great desire and ability to learn.” Freedpeople in Accomac petitioned the Freedmen’s Bureau, requesting the necessary funds to hire two teachers. In their petition, they reminded the Bureau that “we have after two years hard labor succeeded in building two small churches which are to be used as schoolhouses every day.”¹²⁶

By renting land, sharecropping, working as artisans, and building strong community institutions, Shore freedpeople were effectively creating their own alternative vision of freedom. While some government officials and local planters envisioned an agricultural economy with freedmen permanently relegated to positions as dependent laborers, Shore freedmen sought financial independence and land ownership that would ultimately lead to upward mobility.

These efforts combined to produce an intense wave of post-war racial violence on the Eastern Shore, a well-organized reign of terror that was able to thrive within a climate of federal non-intervention. Instances of racially motivated violence did occur sporadically throughout the war itself; government officials worried about "raids and rumors of raids" from Shore rebels, and local whites burned down a few black schools and churches. In the spring and summer of 1866, however, small-scale localized violence gave way to widespread terror.¹²⁷

The change began in June of 1866, when freedman Charles Cranch allegedly tried to kill a local white storekeeper, one Mr. Bird. According to available records, Cranch attempted to rob Bird's store. When spied by the storekeeper, Cranch responded by "cutting [Bird's] throat" and quickly escaped before eventually being caught and hanged by vigilantes. Over the next six months, incensed local whites began a series of "indiscriminate attacks upon freedmen." A group estimated as numbering over 300 men formed "Simon Brown's Company," a band of ex-Confederates and wartime blockade-runners who utilized Klan-style methods of violence to terrorize local blacks. One Freedmen's Bureau official described the typical attack in vivid detail:

[Simon Brown's Company] went to all colored people's houses and finding firearms and ammunition in them, they took all they could find, and then organizing themselves into squads, they went to colored people's homes and demanded admittance, saying they wanted Cranch and if the doors were not thrown open, they would crush them in, which they did in many cases. After getting into the houses they would commence looking for firearms and money, or whatever valuables they could get hold of.¹²⁸

The attacks were consistently described as "unprovoked" and were often horrific. Official records and available trial transcripts mention several fatal

shootings, and one claims that Brown's Company sometimes forced freedpeople to vacate the Shore entirely. Those who were bold enough to resist such orders were most commonly "shot and cruelly beaten." A similar pattern was repeated consistently: angry whites, often with "their faces blacked" and sometimes going about "in daylight without any disguise," entered the homes of freedpeople and stole firearms, valuables, "hairbrushes and combs," and any other available symbols of black economic gain. One Bureau argued that the entire wave of violence was caused by "the presence of many colored soldiers who upon being mustered out of service retained their arms...Almost every freedman has an old gun or pistol he relies on for protection or hunting...[The Company] is focused on disarming returned colored soldiers." Another Bureau investigator claimed that Brown's Company was disproportionately comprised of "a class of poor whites whose hatred arises from the fear that some freedmen will outstrip them in bettering their conditions. They believe that the nigger has not even the right to live."¹²⁹

This pattern of postwar violence on the Shore resembled the racial attacks that plagued other Southern states during the same years. Several scholars have noted the tendency among whites to attack symbols of black progress and domestic stability. Whites destroyed community institutions and emasculated black patriarchs by invading their private sphere (the home) and removing all representations of black strength (firearms) and economic progress (valuables and the houses themselves).¹³⁰

Federal authorities rarely intervened to quash racial violence on the Shore. The same federal officials who haphazardly funneled freedpeople into private contract labor relied exclusively on ineffective local courts to curtail white violence.

Officials initially sent federal troops from Fort Monroe to quell the disturbances during the summer of 1866. The troops actually arrested four members of Brown's Company linked directly to the hanging of Charles Cranch, but allowed local courts to handle the case despite repeated warnings that "if [the suspects] are tried in a civil court, they will not be convicted...It would be impossible to get a jury to convict a white man on the evidence of a colored man." The trial proved to be a farce.

Members of Brown's Company threatened to "kill the first black man" who provided evidence "on the spot," while the all-white jury refused to allow local blacks to testify and prohibited the use of "colored evidence" entirely. All of the accused were quickly acquitted, despite the fact that "their names and deeds are widely known."¹³¹

Throughout 1866 and 1867, federal officials allowed fearful and/or racist local authorities to deal with race-related crimes on the Shore. According to one angry Bureau investigator, the seemingly ceaseless attacks on local freedpeople were "in part due to the meekness and incapacity of local officials who are weak vacillating men possessing no moral courage and who are totally unable to preserve the peace or awe the violators." Various interviews with local justices of the peace validate this rather harsh condemnation of local authorities. Justice George Pew "was intimidated" by local vigilantes and refused to issue arrest warrants because his "neighbors were aroused and excited" by the anti-black fervor that swept the Shore. Likewise, Justice of the Peace William Dix advised a local officer hostile to Brown's Company that "he better leave the matter alone or his life might be taken," while Dix admitted that his own silence and inaction were due to his fear of "getting into trouble" with local whites. Bureau investigators sympathetic with the freedpeople's cause angrily

reported that "local justices refuse to issue warrants in fear of their own safety," and another anti-Brown official stationed on the Shore was so afraid of violent reprisals that he wanted his name removed from all government documents related to Shore violence.¹³²

Once again, the admirable exposes and angry reports of a few isolated Bureau officers could not overcome the overall conservatism of the Bureau and the federal government as a whole. Bureau officials on the Shore and their counterparts in Washington continued to rely on local courts, even though it was obvious that the muscle of the Shore legal system was arrayed against freedpeople. Justice of the Peace George Pew claimed that "all the constables in the county are strong sympathizers with the rioters," while Bureau investigators again and again complained that local constables and sheriffs "do not seek knowledge of the crimes committed but rather avoid such information and would rather let the offenders go untouched by justice." Indeed, some evidence indicates that Brown's Company essentially became the law; white citizens including shopkeeper Bird offered members of Brown's Company financial rewards in exchange for the capture and lynching of local freedpeople. At the very least, local constables "remained silent" and "avoided trying to prevent" violence against freedpeople. The attacks on blacks abated only in the latter part of 1867.¹³³

Scholars should be careful, though, in conflating government inaction in the face of violence with the federal policy of favoring contract labor. While federal officials openly expressed a desire to leave freedpeople to fend for themselves within the competitive (and racist) labor market, the same bureaucrats seldom argued

(directly and openly, at least) that violence against Shore freedpeople was a temporary problem with an automatic, local solution. In other words, while some federal officials openly and maliciously encouraged the economic marginalization of Shore freedpeople, their reactions to racial violence were simultaneously non-interventionist *and* sympathetic. Despite this important distinction, the reluctance of federal officials who opposed federal intervention on principle alone or who feared alienating a nominally "loyal" population, led to financial and personal disaster for many Shore freedpeople.

Many scholars have used the concept of "free labor ideology" to explain the failure of Reconstruction in the South. That mid-nineteenth century Republican ideal can be roughly defined as the belief that a "free labor economy" was more efficient and productive than a slave-based economy. "Free labor" Republicans also believed that freedpeople—if given a free and fair chance to compete in the capitalist economy—would ultimately succeed, since a true free labor economy rewarded hard work above all else.

Since the early 1980s, historians (most notably Eric Foner) have found fault with this ideology. They have argued quite convincingly that many "free labor" Republicans held an unrealistic faith in the free market, one that led them to favor a limited and temporary federal role in the Reconstruction of the South. Once slavery was destroyed, these pundits claimed, the federal government could leave freedpeople to fend for themselves in the new competitive economy. Widespread charity, land redistribution, or other costly plans were therefore unnecessary.

While this argument remains a persuasive way to explain the rise of Liberal Republicanism and the general Republican (and Northern) reluctance to aid Southern freedpeople in the early 1870s, it cannot alone account for the shortcomings of military and Bureau policy on the ground level during the war and the early postwar years. In both Freedmen's Village and Virginia's Eastern Shore, military and (later) Bureau officials never came close to applying a true free labor philosophy. Though isolated voices of protest emerged within the government (especially the Bureau), federal policy exploited freedpeople during the war and forced freedpeople into slave-like positions as dependent agricultural laborers after the war.

Indeed, the overriding goal of federal policy was to eliminate the potential public "burden" the freedpeople represented *and* stabilize the postwar Southern economy by placing freedpeople in the inferior positions where they "belonged" in the eyes of many officials. Contract labor under private planters represented the most efficient way to accomplish these goals, and the military and the Bureau both chose this solution whenever it was possible in both Arlington and the Eastern Shore.

Though contract labor paid wages and technically placed freedpeople within the larger competitive economy, it was in no way "free labor"; military and Bureau officials simply forced freedpeople to sign contracts, giving them little or no role in choosing the terms of their economic future. Other options—industrial labor, artisanal work, migration to the North, and (most radical of all) land redistribution—were eliminated by the federal emphasis on contract labor. Most damning of all, many military and Bureau officials openly justified this policy with racist rhetoric about the "rightful place" of freedpeople as subordinate farm workers. Radical talk

about a potential “revolution in race relations” was meaningless when the military and Bureau officials on the local level—the men who really made federal policy—were determined to prevent that revolution from happening.

Finally, when factors like the lack of an accessible local planter class in Arlington made contract labor impossible, the federal military simply decided to temporarily exploit contrabands for its own purposes. Until overcrowding necessitated a change in Village policy, military officials at Freedman’s Village impressed able contrabands and transformed the remaining freedpeople into a mass of underpaid (indeed, virtually unpaid) government workers with no mobility and no control over Village land or the products of their labor. Though the grounds of Arlington looked green and scenic in comparison to the crowded streets of nearby Washington, the Village remained (in essence) a forced labor camp.

In short, historians can find the roots of Reconstruction’s failure in the wartime and immediate postwar government policies in Arlington and Virginia’s Eastern Shore. The freedpeople—despite their efforts and demands for independence—could not overcome the racism of local planters and the conservatism of the federal officials who would play a crucial role in determining their immediate economic future. When one considers wartime and early Reconstruction, it becomes readily understandable that many freedpeople across the South ultimately concluded that “The Yankees helped free us, so they say, but they let us be put back in slavery again.”¹³⁴

NOTES

¹ George Payne addressing a group of his fellow freedmen. Cited in James McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), p. 62.

² Annie Davis to President Lincoln, cited in Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Travolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie Rowland, Eds. *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867: Series I, Volume I: The Destruction of Slavery* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 384.

³ For good examples of revisionist and post-revisionist Reconstruction literature, see Laura Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988); and Michael Les Benedict, *A Compromise of Principle* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974).

⁴ See Louis Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865* (London: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 7 and p. 167.

⁵ For several treatments of Southern contraband policy and Louisiana Reconstruction see Lawanda Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom* (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1981); Peyton McCrary, *Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: The Louisiana Experiment* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978); C. Peter Ripley, *Slaves and Freedmen in Civil War Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976); Jacque Voegeli, *Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967); Martha Bigelow, "Vicksburg: Experiment in Freedom," *Journal of Mississippi History*, Volume 26 (1), 1964, pp. 28-44; Martha Bigelow, "Freedmen of the Mississippi Valley, 1862-1865," *Civil War History*, Volume 8 (1), (1962), pp. 38-47; Martha Bigelow, "Plantation Lessee Problems in 1864," *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 27 (3), (1961), pp. 354-367; Joseph Holliday, "Freedmen's Aid Societies in Cincinnati, 1862-1870," *Cincinnati Historical Society Bulletin*, Volume 22 (3), (1964), pp. 169-185; Frank Levstik, "A Journey Among the Contrabands," *Indiana Magazine of History*, Volume 73 (3), (1977), pp. 203-222; William Messner, "Black Violence and White Response: Louisiana, 1862," *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 41 (1), (1975), pp. 19-38; and C. Peter Ripley, "The Black Family in Transition: Louisiana, 1860-1865," *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 41 (3), (1975), pp. 369-380;

⁶ Cam Walker, "Corinth: The Story of a Contraband Camp," *Civil War History*, Volume 20 (1), (1974), 5-22, p. 17. Walker's article makes for a very interesting comparison with Freedmen's Village. Like the Village, Corinth seems to have been a preferable alternative to dangerously crowded camps and contract labor, but officials at Corinth also never embraced free labor ideology.

⁷ For information on Davis Bend, see Janet Lee Hermann, *Pursuit of a Dream* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981); James T. Currie, "Freedmen at Davis Bend, April 1864," *Journal of Mississippi History*, Volume 46 (2), (1984), pp. 120-129; Steven J. Ross, "Freed Soil, Freed Labor, Freed Men: John Eaton and the Davis Bend Experiment," *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 44 (2), (1978), pp. 213-232. Davis Bend contrasts sharply with Freedmen's Village, since a select

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group of freedmen at the Bend were able to independently cultivate the land without government interference.

⁸ See Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1964). While nearly all Sea Island lands were eventually taken from freedmen and redistributed to white entrepreneurs, wartime Reconstruction at Port Royal generally allowed freedmen to operate under a much greater degree of independence than their counterparts at Arlington. In addition, see James McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), which generally argues that abolitionists and missionaries combined to make wartime Reconstruction a radical departure from slavery. Interestingly, after reviewing Gerteis' *From Contraband to Freedman*, McPherson confesses that he was probably far too "optimistic" in his assessment of contraband camps and wartime Reconstruction and regrets lending almost all historical agency to abolitionists and missionaries rather than the blacks themselves.

⁹ For other general "pessimistic" interpretations of contraband policy that mirror Gerteis' work, see Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), which has brief sections on contraband camps within a more "optimistic" narrative; Mary Berry, *Military Necessity and Civil Rights Policy* (London: National University Publications, 1977), which argues convincingly that policy toward contrabands was largely determined by military demands rather than any ethical sympathy with the contrabands themselves; Susie Ames, "Federal Policy Toward the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 1861," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Volume 69 (4), (1961), pp. 432-459; Gaines Foster, "The Limitations of Federal Health Care for Freedmen, 1862-1870," *The Journal of Southern History*, Volume 48 (3), (19??), pp. 349-372; and Louis Gerteis, "Salmon P. Chase, Radicalism, and the Politics of Emancipation," *The Journal of American History*, Volume 60 (1), (1973), pp. 42-62.

¹⁰ For the scant historiography on Freedmen's Village, see Roberta Schildt, "Aladdin's Lamp: Education in Freedmen's Village," *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Volume 10 (3), (1995), pp. 7-18; Roberta Schildt, "Freedman's Village: Arlington, Virginia, 1863-1900," *Arlington Historical Magazine*; Joseph Reidy, "Coming From the Shadow of the Past: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom and Freedmen's Village, 1863-1900," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Volume 95 (4), (1987), pp. 403-428; Felix James, "The Establishment of Freedmen's Village in Arlington, Virginia," *Negro History Bulletin*, Volume 33 (4), (1970), pp. 90-93; Felix James, "The Decline and Fall of Freedmen's Village," *Negro History Bulletin*, Volume 37 (3), (1974), pp. 247-250. Schildt's work is mostly descriptive and lacks argumentation, while James focuses mostly on the establishment and late nineteenth century decline of the Village. Reidy's article is excellent, but is basically concerned with the administration of the Freedmen's Bureau and gives little attention to wartime Reconstruction.

¹¹ For interesting takes on these issues, see James Scott, *Seeing Like the State How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998); see also Foner, *Reconstruction*. Foner's work is a must for anyone seeking to understand what he has deemed "free labor ideology," while Scott's comparative analysis of various state-sponsored camps and "reorganizations" seems particularly relevant to Freedmen's Village. Scott argues that government's often use "camps" and "settlements" to reassert control over segments of the population that could prove costly or disruptive.

¹² For an extensive look at private contracts and the general economic effects of emancipation, see Richard Sutch and Roger Ransom, *One Kind of Freedom: the Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Also, see Dan Carter, *When the War Was Over: The Failure of Self-Reconstruction in the South* (London: Louisiana University Press,

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1985). Carter provides a Southern-based look at the white racism and intransigence that doomed contract labor systems and Reconstruction in general throughout the South. See also Foner, *Reconstruction*, and William Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879* (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1979). Both works provide a nice overview of the decline in the Republican/federal commitment to Southern blacks and the conservative nature of "free labor ideology." See Scott, *Seeing Like the State* for an interesting comparative analysis.

¹³ See the following: Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*; Edward Magdol, *A Right to the Land: Essays on the Freedmen's Community* (London: Greenwood Press, 1977); and Julie Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Each of these works argues (to varying extents) that freedmen envisioned a different type of economy, one based on land ownership and community. Saville's work is particularly convincing in this respect. Again, for a general economic analysis of the postbellum Southern economy, see Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*.

¹⁴ See Ames, "Policy on the Eastern Shore"; Carter, *When the War Was Over*; Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*; Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction*, and Foner, *Reconstruction* for general discussions of contract labor policy and "free labor" economics. See also Scott, *Seeing Like the State*.

¹⁵ For recent scholarship on racial violence in the postbellum South, see especially Scott Nelson, *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railways, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*; and Rene Hayden, "An Incident of Outrage: Gender, Race, Modernity, and the First Klan in North Carolina." Unpublished article written for the 2002 OAH Annual Meeting, Washington, D. C.

¹⁶ Cited in Ira Berlin, Steven Miller, Joseph Reidy, and Leslie Rowland, eds, *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867: Series I, Volume II: The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 298.

¹⁷ See George Noyes, *The Bivouac and the Battlefield* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), pp. 20-25.

¹⁸ For accounts of slave escapes, see Noyes, pp. 20-25; James McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965); Warren Cudsworth, *History of the First Regiment, Massachusetts Infantry* (Boston: Walker, Fuller, and Company, 1866), pp. 91-3; Charles Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting, A Volume of Personal Observations with the Army and Navy, from the First Battle of Bull Run to the Fall of Richmond* (Boston: Tickner and Fields, 1866); William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), p. 246 and p. 278; Clarence Mohr, *On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia* (London: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), and Berlin, et al., *The Destruction of Slavery*.

¹⁹ W. S. Rosecrans to commander at Camp Todd, September 11, 1861, cited in R. N. Scott, et al, eds, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D. C., 1880-1901). For similar entries, see George Meade to Ulysses S. Grant, December 21, 1864 and George Morgan to Edwin Stanton May 3, 1862. The Official Records (OR) overflow with similar entries.

²⁰ Colonel Henry Briggs to Brig. Gen. D. N. Couch, October 1 1861, Records of the United States Continental Commands, RG 393, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

²¹ Charles Calvert to Simon Cameron, Records of the Secretary of War, RG 107, National

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Archives, Washington D.C; and Calvert to Stanton March 31 1862, RG 107.

²² Maryland Governor Thomas Hicks to Simon Cameron, November 18 1861, RG 107, cited in Berlin et al, *Destruction of Slavery*.

²³ See J. H. Bayne et al to E. M. Stanton, enclosing an affidavit of A. J. Smoot March 1 1862, RG 107, cited in Berlin et al, *The Destruction of Slavery*. For other documents touching on this subject, see Berlin et al, *The Destruction of Slavery*, pp. 342-6 and pp. 348-65.

²⁴ Brig. Gen. Henry H. Lockwood to Gen. Robert Schenck April 1 1863, RG 393, NA.

²⁵ Letter forwarded by Maryland Governor Thomas Hicks to Hon. S. Cameron, November 18 1861, RG 107, NA.

²⁶ Affidavit of Grandison Briscoe, February 6 1864, RG 107, NA.

²⁷ See for instance Dola Ann Jones to Col. John Eaton August 16 1865, Records of the Bureau of Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, RG 105, NA; E. B Tyler to Lieut. Col. S. B. Lawrence June 15 1864, cited in Berlin, et al, *The Destruction of Slavery*, pp. 380-1; and Col. A. L. Brown to unnamed Captain, June 4 1864, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, National Archives, cited in Berlin, et al, *The Destruction of Slavery*, p. 382. For more documents regarding the controversy surrounding escaped Maryland slaves, see Berlin et al, *Destruction of Slavery*, pp. 331-391.

²⁸ See for instance Cudsworth, p. 91 and Noyes, p. 93.

²⁹ See *Washington Evening Star*, February 13, 1862 and April 4, 1862; *Daily National Intelligencer* June 25, 1861 and July 2, 1861; Margaret Leech, *Reville in Washington, 1861-1865* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1941), pp. 280-310; and Constance Greene, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 57-62.

³⁰ For some vivid descriptions of Duff Green's Row and the outdoor Washington camps, the spread of disease, and the prevalence of "negro-stealing," see *Washington Evening Star*, April 23, 1861, June 25, 1861, December 5, 1861, December 4, 1861, January 6, 1862, February 13, 1862, March 17, 1862, April 4, 1862, May 30, 1862, and October 24, 1862; Testimony of Danforth B. Nichols before the American Freedmen's Inquire Commission April 1863, RG 94, NA; Leech, pp. 304-8; Green, pp. 57-62.

³¹ B. B. French to E. Stanton February 13 1862, RG 107, NA.

³² J. A. Dahlgren to Gideon Welles January 21 1861, Naval Records Collection of the Office of the Naval Records Library, Record Group 45, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

³³ See above articles.

³⁴ See testimony cited above in note 30.

³⁵ Reverend Henry Taylor, cited in McPherson, *Negro's Civil War*, pp. 133-4.

³⁶ Joseph Enoch Williams et al to Honorable Senate and House of Representatives, cited in Berlin et al, *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor*, pp. 263-5.

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³⁷ See A Circular to the Friends of Humanity, published by the National Freedmen's Relief Association, 1863.

³⁸ See Elias Greene to Maj. Gen. S. P. Heintzelman, May 5 1863, Quartermaster General's Records, Records Group 92, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

³⁹ See *Harper's Weekly*, May 7, 1864; *Washington Evening Star*, December 4, 1863 and May 22, 1863, *Daily National Intelligencer*, October 7, 1863 and October 17, 1863 for idealistic descriptions of the Village.

⁴⁰ See Montgomery Meigs to Edwin Stanton August 15 1864, RG 92, NA; Greene to Col. Charles Thomas January 22 1864, RG 92, NA.

⁴¹ See above letters and newspaper articles for basic descriptions of the Village as well as Charles Thomas to Elias Greene, December 5 1863, RG 92, NA for information on hospitals; J. M. Brown to George B. Carse March 9 1865, Records of the Bureau of Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives, Washington, D. C. for a brief bit on schooling at Arlington.

⁴² See various issues of *The National Freedmen* and the *The Freedmen's Advocate* from 1864-1865 and *A Circular to the Friends of Humanity*, published in 1866, a document that outlines the history and goals of the NFRA.

⁴³ E. H. Ludington to Col. James Hardie, March 1864, Records of the Office of the Inspector General, Record Group 159, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁴⁴ For detailed descriptions of Camp Barker and other struggling Washington settlements, see Second Annual Report of the NFRA, cited in RG 92, NA; Josephine Griffing to M. Meigs July 22 1865, J. M. Brown to H. A. Perry February 4 1865, Brown to Meigs March 12 1865, Griffing to Charles Thomas January 1 1865, all found in RG 92, NA; Testimony of James J. Ferree, Superintendent of Camp Barker, January 1864, RG 393, NA. For population statistics from Camp Barker and Freedman's Village, see Testimony of Danforth B. Nichols, Superintendent of Contrabands at Camp Barker (and later Freedman's Village), April 1863, RG 105, NA.

⁴⁵ For evidence of a military presence in Arlington, see for instance General U. S. Grant to George Meade, May 11 1865, and general orders from Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, June 25 1863, both cited in R. N. Scott's compendium of *Official Records*. There are many other nearly identical letters detailing the constant movement of troops in and around Arlington. For descriptions of Louisiana, the Midwest, and Virginia's Eastern Shore, see appropriate books and articles by Susie Ames, Lawanda Cox, C. Peter Ripley, V. Jacque Voegeli, Louis Gerteis, John Eaton, Peyton McCrary, Mary F. Berry, Martha Bigelow, all cited above. Each of these locations featured a very large nearby class of local planters, which led to the development of (often) harsh and oppressive contract labor systems, most famously in Louisiana under General Nathaniel Banks. Since Arlington and many surrounding towns were largely abandoned once the war began, Village contrabands (partially) escaped this fate.

⁴⁶ See E. H. Ludington and C. E. Compton to James A. Hardie, July 30 1864, RG 159, NA. Ludington and Compton investigated the camp in July. This seven-page letter represents their findings. See also Benjamin F. Taylor, *Mission Ridge and Lookout Mountain, With Pictures of Life in Camp and Field*. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1872), pp. 68-70. Taylor briefly visited the Village and saw the contrabands digging the graves of Arlington cemetery throughout his visit.

⁴⁷ For details on impressment at Freedmen's Village, see Testimony of Lieut. Charles Shepard January 1864, RG 393 and testimony of Danforth B. Nichols, January 1864, RG 393, NA.

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⁴⁸ See J. M. Brown to Mr. G. G. Beisley, December 10 1864, RG 105, NA.

⁴⁹ Testimony of Lewis Johnson, January 1864, RG 393, NA.

⁵⁰ For evidence of forced labor among women and children see above testimony and M. Meigs to E. Stanton August 15 1864, RG 92, NA. For mobility regulations, see K. Knox to J. Hardie October 19 1864, RG 159, NA. Interestingly, freedmen were also prohibited from buying alcohol from a "sutler's establishment" on the premises. See J. M. Brown to George Carse November 4 1864, RG 105, NA.

⁵¹ Testimony of Betsy Brown, January 1864, RG 393, NA. Also cited in Reidy, "Freedmen's Village," p. 413.

⁵² J. M. Brown to George Carse, December 3 1864, RG 105, NA.

⁵³ For information on the Lucy Johnson case, see testimony of Louisa Barker, January 14 1864, RG 393, NA.

⁵⁴ For further information on the Henry Cook case, see testimony of Henry Cook and Danforth Nichols, January 1864, RG 393, NA.

⁵⁵ See Lewis Johnson testimony, cited in noted 49.

⁵⁶ For several vivid descriptions of the Camp Barker removal and that of other Washington settlements, see D. B. Nichols to E. Greene, January 23 1864, RG 92, NA; Greene to Col. J. H. Taylor January 30 1863, RG 92, NA; H. E. Simmons to Greene January 23 1864, RG 92, NA; E.H. Holmes to E. Greene January 23 1864, RG 92, NA; W. A. Benedict to Greene January 23 1864, RG 92, NA; M. C. Perry to Greene January 22 1864, RG 92, NA.

⁵⁷ See for instance J. M. Brown to M. Meigs, December 9 1864, RG 92, NA; C. Dana to James Ferree and William Slade January 10 1865, RG 92, NA; C. W. Foster to E. H. Day, December 7 1864, RG 92, NA.

⁵⁸ On the initial condition of incoming villagers and the spread of new diseases, see D. B. Nichols to E. M. Greene, January 23, 1864; H. E. Simmons to Greene January 23 1864; Greene to Col. Charles Thomas January 23 1864, all filed in RG 92, NA.

⁵⁹ On physical conditions and mobility restrictions on Mason's Island, see Ludington and Compton to Col. J. Hardie July 30 1864, RG 159, NA; R. Rayburn to J. Eaton, September 8 1865, RG 92, NA; K. Knox to J. Hardie October 13 1864, RG 159, NA; Knox to Hardie October 19 1864.

⁶⁰ For copies of labor and apprenticeship contracts, see General Contracts authored by Elias Greene, 1864, filed in RG 159, NA. For a government evaluation of hiring on Mason's Island, see K. Knox to J. Hardie, October 13 1864, RG 159, NA and Knox to Hardie October 19 1864, RG 159, NA.

⁶¹ Statistics cited in Berlin, et al, *Wartime Genesis of Free Labor*, p. 261.

⁶² For lists of employment locations, see "Register of Freedmen Departing from Mason's Island, 1864-1865," filed in RG 105, NA. For complaints of "bound out" Mason's Island freedmen, see testimony of Samuel Brown, September 1865, RG 105, NA and Carter Holmes to Col. Wm. Beebe April 22 1867, RG 105, NA.

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⁶³ For black resistance to the contract labor system, see Berlin, et al, *Wartime Genesis of Free Labor*, 260-261; Knox to Hardie, October 19 1864, RG 159, NA; Greene to J. H. Taylor, January 30 1863, RG 92, NA.

⁶⁴ The only article devoted to education at the Village is Roberta Schildt, "Aladdin's Lamp: Education in Freedmen's Village," *Arlington Historical Magazine*, Volume 10 (3), (1995), pp. 7-18. It focuses on the school conditions and the high attendance rate rather than analyzing curriculum. For the views of Village officials on Village education, see J. M. Brown to George B. Carse, February 11 1865, RG 105, NA and E. Greene to J. H. Taylor, January 30 1863, RG 92, NA.

⁶⁵ See appropriate books and articles on Midwest and Sea Island cited above, especially Rose, *Rehearsal*, which has great descriptions of debates between missionaries and military officials.

⁶⁶ Quote taken directly from the "American Tract Society Constitution," cited in Edwin Gaustad, ed, *American Tract Society Documents: 1824-1925* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 6 and Clarence Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1960), p. 192.

⁶⁷ "Duties of Masters" is included in Seth Bliss, *Letters to the Members, Patrons, and Friends of the Branch of the American Tract Society in Boston* (Boston, Crocker and Brewster, 1858), quote taken from p. 136.

⁶⁸ For reaction to "Duties" see Griffin, pp. 192-197.

⁶⁹ For details of the split, see Bliss, pp. 1-140. This source is a collection of contentious letters and speeches regarding the issue. The most openly abolitionist speech in the collection was given by William Wilberforce and entitled "The Enormity of the Slave Trade and the Duty of Seeking the Moral and Spiritual Elevation of the Colored Race." (Boston: American Tract Society, specific date of publishing unknown--probably 1858).

⁷⁰ Isaac Brinckerhoff, *Advice to Freedmen* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), pp. 18-19.

⁷¹ See Brinckerhoff, pp. 15-25; Jared Waterbury, *Friendly Counsels for Freedmen* (New York: AMS Press, 1980); Helen Brown, *John Freeman and His Family* (New York: AMS Press, 1980); Clinton Fisk, *Plain Counsels for Freedmen* (New York: AMS Press, 1980).

⁷² See American Tract Society, *The Freedman's Spelling Book* (New York: AMS Press, 1980). American Tract Society, *The Freedmen's Second Reader* (New York: AMS Press, 1980). American Tract Society, *The Freedmen's Third Reader* (New York: AMS Press, 1980).

⁷³ See the nearly identical monthly or weekly (the periods for each varied) issues of *The Freedman* (1864-1869) and *The Freedman's Journal*, 1865-1866.

⁷⁴ Quotes taken from Carlton Mabey, *Sojourner Truth* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 120-122, and Erlene Stetson and Linda David, *Glorying in Tribulation: The Lifework of Sojourner Truth* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1994), pp. 146-150.

⁷⁵ Quotes taken from Fisk, 47, *The Freedman*, January 1864, and *The Freedman's Journal*, January 1865.

⁷⁶ Waterbury 5-7.

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⁷⁷ For an overview of the more liberal AMA see Clara Deboer, *His Soul is Marching On: African Americans Who Taught the Freedmen for the American Missionary Association* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), and Griffin, pp. 190-200. For an overview of Northern missionary associations in general, see Charles Cole, *The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelicals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954). Though Cole focuses mostly on famous abolitionist fire-eaters who fomented sectional tension, his work does examine the slavery and race-related divisions within the religious community. Quotes about education taken from NFRA publications: *The National Freedman*, February 1865 and June 1866; *The Freedman's Advocate* October 1864 and August 1864.

⁷⁸ For complaints about contraband marriage practices see W. F. Spurgan to S. N. Clark, November 20 1865, RG 105, NA. For the general historiographical debate surrounding freedmen education, see the following monographs: James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South: 1860-1935* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Henry Swint, *The Northern Teacher in the South: 1862-1870* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967); Robert Morris, *Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in The South, 1861-1870* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Ronald Butchart, *Northern Schools, Southern Blacks, and Reconstruction: Freedmen's Education, 1862-1875* (London: Greenwood Press, 1980); and Jacqueline Jones, *Soldiers of Light and Love* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980). Swint tends to heroicize Northern teachers; he acknowledges the varying motives for becoming a teacher in the South, but does not analyze curriculum and its message. Morris has a more pessimistic view of curriculum in general, especially that of the American Tract Society. Both give ample agency to the freedmen themselves, who spearheaded the educational effort with their eager attendance and demand for education. Though Butchart distinguishes between "secular" and "sectarian" educational organizations, he concludes that most members of both categories (especially the latter) offered decidedly conservative educational philosophies and placed far too much blind faith in "free labor" and the market economy. Jones has a more positive view of Northern teachers, claiming that most were genuinely liberal abolitionists. She does admit that many of them held condescending beliefs about the effects of slavery and used traditional classroom strategies that did not work well with freedmen. For information on attendance at the Village school, see Schildt, "Aladdin's Lamp."

⁷⁹ For evidence of the intensification in Village policy, see Benjamin Wade to O. C. Howard, April 3 1867, RG 105, NA; Dangerfield Beverly to Andrew Johnson, September 27 1865; testimony of Lieut. Lomas, September 1865; testimony of Liley Bailey, September 1865; W. W. Rogers to A. A. Lawrence August 18 1866; S. N. Clark to W. W. Rogers December 29 1866; Clark to Lawrence November 2 1866; Lawrence to O. C. Howard, February 18, 1867; Clark to Burgevin, March 7 1866; J. M. Brown to F. B. Medlan June 12 1865, all filed in RG 105, NA.

⁸⁰ For evidence of deterioration of conditions at the Village and Mason's Island, see A. A. Lawrence to C. H. Howard October 31 1866; S. N. Clark to C. H. Howard December 31 1866; Clark to Howard, May 31 1866; J. H. McBlair to Howard, May 9 1866; R. Rayburn to Col. J. Eaton September 8 1865, all filed in RG 105, NA.

⁸¹ Clark to Burgevin, March 7 1866, RG 105, NA.

⁸² For data on hirings, see "Register of Freedmen Departing Mason's Island," RG 105, NA.

⁸³ Testimony of James Graw, April 1866, RG 105, NA.

⁸⁴ Testimony of Joseph Hall on behalf of Rindy Allen, September 1865, RG 105, NA.

⁸⁵ Carter Holmes to Lieut. Col. Wm. Beebe, April 22 1867, cited in Berlin, et al. *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor*, p. 346.

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⁸⁶ For data on Village contrabands sent to Arkansas, see S. P. Lee to C. H. Howard, January 22 1867 and H. Sweeney to Col. H. Page, both filed in RG 105, NA, and also cited in Reidy, "Freedmen's Village," p. 416.

⁸⁷ For the protest documents of various villagers, see Benjamin Wade to C. H. Howard, April 3 1867; Dangerfield Beverly to Andrew Johnson and accompanying testimony, September 27, 1865; W. W. Rogers to A. A. Lawrence August 18, 1866, enclosing the complaint of contraband Jerry Savage; Lawrence to Howard, January 7, 1867 regarding meeting of angry Village freedmen; Reverend Robert Laws et al. to Howard, December 1866, outlining freedmen grievances; John Peterson to Howard December 26 1866; Clark to Lawrence November 2 1866; Hannah Turner to _____ (no name designated) November 13 1866; Laws, Nelson Wormley, and S. Robinson to _____ (no name designated) January 1 1867; Laws to Howard, January 14 1867, all filed in RG 105, NA.

⁸⁸ For documents specifically requesting land ownership rights, see Lawrence to Howard, January 7, 1867; Laws, et al to Howard, December 1866; Peterson to Howard, December 26 1866; Laws, Wormley, Robinson, et al to _____, January 1 1867; Laws to Howard, January 14, 1867, all filed under RG 105, NA.

⁸⁹ For details on leaseholders, see A. A. Lawrence to C. H. Howard October 31 1866, RG 105, NA, and Reidy, "Freedmen's Village," 419. For details on those families who set up homes just outside the Village, see W. W. Rogers to S. P. Lee, November 27 1866, RG 105, NA and Reidy, "Freedmen's Village," pp. 419-420.

⁹⁰ See W. F. Spurgon to S. N. Clark, November 20 1865, RG 105, NA.

⁹¹ See R. Laws to C. H. Howard, December 31 1866, RG 105, NA; Stetson and David, pp. 148-150; Mabee, pp. 148-152; Laws to J. W. Vandenburg, November 15 1866, RG 105, NA; Announcement of Captain J. M. Brown regarding Village resident Steward Gwynn returning from New York, March 23 1865, RG 105, NA. Note: Records regarding the fate of Village freedmen moving North are extremely rare, while those of freedmen contracted to Southern planters are far more abundant. That Villagers who headed North found stable jobs and friendlier environments is a plausible assumption, especially considering that Northern families who "applied" for Village freedmen generally expressed an earnest desire to employ blacks in "good places."

⁹² For comparative analyses of the economic ideas of freedmen and those of federal officials, see Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction*, Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, Edward Magdol, *A Right to the Land*, and Laura Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*.

⁹³ For these comments, see S. N. Clark to W. W. Rogers, December 29 1866, RG 105, NA.

⁹⁴ See relevant documents cited above for an outline of worsening conditions. For documents that reveal evidence of government officials explicitly rejecting the pleas of the Villagers, see Lawrence to Howard, February 18 1867, C. S. B. Wall to Howard, April 13 1867, Clark to Burgevin, March 7 1866, and J. M. Brown to H. M. Stinson, May 20, 1865, all filed in RG 105, NA.3

⁹⁵ For a detailed account of the painfully drawn out process of legally removing the freedmen, one that lasted until the end of the nineteenth century, see James, "Decline," and Reidy, "Freedmen's Village"; *Washington Post*, December 7, 1887, and *New York Herald*, December 7, 1887.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Ames, "Eastern Shore," p. 440.

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⁹⁷ Quoted in Ames, pp. 434-5 and John Dix, *Memoirs of John A. Dix* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1883), p. 25 and p. 31.

⁹⁸ Ames, pp. 438-400, and Dix, pp. 30-35.

⁹⁹ Ames, pp. 438-400, and Dix, pp. 38-39.

¹⁰⁰ Proclamation cited in Ames, "Eastern Shore," pp. 442-3, and Dix, pp. 40-1.

¹⁰¹ For a detailed first-person account of the Dix expedition, see Alfred Davenport, *Camp and Field Life of the Fifth New York Voluntary Regiment* (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1879), pp. 125-133, and Ames, "Eastern Shore," pp. 444-456.

¹⁰² Quote taken from General Henry Lockwood to Col. W. P. Whipple, August 7 1862, RG 107, NA.

¹⁰³ Major H. Hayman to General Robert Schenck, September 16 1863 and General V. Massey to Captain R. F. Duvall, November 21 1863, both filed in RG 393, NA. See also C. S. Henry to Col. Kinsman January 10 1864 and Henry to Kinsman March 23 1864, both filed in RG 105, NA.

¹⁰⁴ See Henry to Kinsman, February 29 1864 and Henry to Kinsman, January 10 1864, both filed in RG 105, NA.

¹⁰⁵ See Hayman to Schenck, September 16, 1863 and Massey to Duvall, November 21 1863, both filed in RG 393, NA. See also "Special Order #76 from the Provost Marshall on the Eastern Shore of Virginia," October 24 1864, RG 393, NA.

¹⁰⁶ See Hayman to Schenck, Henry to Kinsman, January 10 1864, and Henry to Kinsman, March 30, 1864, RG 105, NA.

¹⁰⁷ See Henry to Kinsman, February 29 1864, and "Circular from the Office of Provost Marshall for Accomack and Northampton Counties," February 12 1864, RG 393, NA.

¹⁰⁸ See "Special Order #76 from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," October 24 1864, (unnumbered) "Special Order from the Provost Marshall of Virginia," November 4 1864, Lt. Colonel and Provost Marshall Frank J. White to Thomas R. Joynes, November 1 1864, and White to Edward Ord, February 6 1865, all filed in RG 393, NA.

¹⁰⁹ See above documents for an overview on the new Shore labor policy. Quotes taken directly from "Special Order #76" and (unnumbered) "Special Order," October and November 1864.

¹¹⁰ See White to Captain Mahon, November 11 1864, RG 393, NA, Mahon to Natson (?), December 23 1864, RG 393, NA and above documents. Quotes taken from White to Mahon and Mahon to Natson.

¹¹¹ See (unnumbered) "Special Order," White to Joynes, and White to Ord. Quotes taken from "Special Order" and White to Joynes.

¹¹² See above documents. Quotes taken from White to Ord, February 6 1865.

¹¹³ See White to Ord, White to G. C. Taylor, February 11 1865, and "Special Order #74 from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," October 22 1864, all filed in RG 393, NA.

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¹¹⁴ See White to H. E. Stern, November 2 1864, White to T. Elliot, January 31 1865, both filed in RG 393, NA. See also "General Order #2 from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," March 6 1866, and "General Order #3 from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," March 19 1866, filed in RG 105, NA.

¹¹⁵ See Stuart Barnes to O. Brown, June 21 1865, RG 105, NA, and White to Benjamin Butler, November (?) 1864, RG 393, NA.

¹¹⁶ For several examples of Shore labor contracts, see "Miscellaneous Labor Contracts, 1865," filed in RG 105, NA.

¹¹⁷ See B. L. Parish to Edwin Stanton, January 16 1865, RG 94, NA, and "Circular Order from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," January 1865, RG 393, NA.

¹¹⁸ See Ed. Murphy to O. Brown, January 31 1867, RG 105, NA, and White to Ord, February 6 1865.

¹¹⁹ For Bureau policy on the Eastern Shore, see especially "Circular #13," April 4 1866, "General Order #5," May 4 1866, ____ to O. Brown, January 3 1866, and O. S. Pride to O. Brown, March 5 1866, all filed in RG 105, NA. For an overview of federal charity and benevolence under the wartime administration and the Bureau, see the following documents: C. S. Henry to Col. Kinsman, March 30 1864, RG 105, NA, White to Ord, February 6 1865, RG 393, NA, White to Stern, November 2 1864, RG 393, NA, White to G. C. Taylor, February 1 1865, RG 393, NA, "Special Order #74 from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," October 22 1864, RG 393, NA, "Circular Order from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," December 23 1864, RG 393, NA, White to T. Elliot, January 31 1865, RG 393, NA, White to T. Elliot February 11 1865, RG 393, NA, White to Col. Small, February 14 1865, RG 393, NA, Stuart Barnes to O. Brown, June 21 1865, RG 105, NA, William P. Londte to A. S. Flagg, September 4 1865, RG 105, NA, "General Order #2," March 6 1866, RG 105, NA, and "General Order #3," March 19 1866, RG 105, NA.

¹²⁰ See O. S. Pride to O. Brown, March 5 1866, RG 105, NA.

¹²¹ See J. Lord to A. S. Flagg, September 1 1865, RG 105, NA.

¹²² See William Londte to A. S. Flagg, September 4 1865, RG 105, NA.

¹²³ See "Circular #14," April 4 1866, RG 105, NA.

¹²⁴ See Ed. Murphy to O. Brown, January 1 1867, RG 105, NA. For general discussions and debates regarding the forces behind the development of sharecropping, see the following: Jonathan Wiener and Harold Woodman. "American Historical Review Forum: Class Structure and Economic Development in the American South, 1865-1955," *American Historical Review*, Volume 84 (4), (October 1979), pp. 970-1006; Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*; Saville, *The Work of Reconstruction*; and Magdol, *A Right to the Land*.

¹²⁵ See "Circular from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," January 1865, RG 393, NA, and Murphy to Brown.

¹²⁶ See H. O. Sidney to A. S. Flagg, July 10 1865, RG 105, NA, William Londte to Flagg, September 4 1865, RG 105, NA, John H. Offner ("on behalf of the people") to Major G. P. Sherwood, June 17 1867, RG 105, NA, Jackson (?) to S. C. Armstrong, June 6 1867, RG 105, NA, and O. S. Pride to O. Brown, April 1 1866, RG 105, NA.

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¹²⁷ For general evidence of wartime hostility toward Shore freedmen, see C. S. Henry to Col. Kinsman, March 23 1864, RG 105, NA, General V. Massey to Captain R. F. Duvall, November 21 1863, RG 393, NA, and "Special Order #70 from the Provost Marshall of the Eastern Shore of Virginia," October 15 1864, RG 393, NA.

¹²⁸ See General A. H. Henry to Brig. Gen. S F. Barnstein, August 5 1866, RG 393, NA, M. French to S. C. Armstrong, July 25 1866, RG 105, NA, and testimony of Major General A. H. Terry, August 9 1866, RG 105, NA. Long quote taken from French to Armstrong.

¹²⁹ See French to James A. Bates, July 30 1866, RG 105, NA, T. H. Evans to French, July 27 1866, RG 105, NA, "Complaints of Freedmen James Seymor," June 30 1866, RG 105, NA, Nelson A. Miles to Fort Monroe, July 30, 1866, RG 105, NA, Ed. Murphy to O. Brown, October 31 1866, RG 105, NA, and Ed. Murphy to O. Brown, January 30 1866, RG 105, NA.

¹³⁰ For recent scholarship on the Ku Klux Klan and violence directed against Southern freedmen, see Nelson, *Iron Confederacies*, especially chapters 5-6, Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*, and Hayden, "An Incident of Outrage."

¹³¹ See French to Armstrong, July 25 1866, RG 105, NA, French to Bates, July 30 1866, RG 105, NA, General A. H. Terry to Brig. General S. F. Barnstein, August 5 1866, RG 105, NA, and Testimony of General A. H. Terry, recorded August 9 1866, RG 105, NA.

¹³² For evidence of local law enforcement problems and official reluctance, see Ed. Murphy to O. Brown, January 30, 1866, RG 105, NA, testimony of George Pew, recorded August 9 1866, RG 105, NA, testimony of William Dix, recorded August 9 1866, RG 105, NA, French to Armstrong, July 25, 1866, RG 105, NA, and T. H. Evans to French, July 27 1866, RG 105, NA.

¹³³ See French to Bates, July 30, 1866, RG 105, NA, testimony of General A. H. Terry, recorded August 9 1866, RG 105, NA, Ed. Murphy to O. Brown January 30 1866, RG 105, NA, French to Armstrong, July 25 1866, RG 105, NA, testimony of William Dix, recorded August 9 1866, RG 105, NA, Ed. Murphy to S. C. Armstrong, November 26 1866, RG 105, NA, and General Sherwood to Lt. E. W. Stone, November 27 1867, RG 105, NA.

¹³⁴ Quote taken from Foner, 610. For general "revisionist" narrative of Reconstruction, see Les Benedict, *A Compromise of Principle*, which focuses mostly on Reconstruction during the Johnson administration, and Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, which focuses on the Grant and Hayes administrations.

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